Silicon Times Report

The Original Independent OnLine Magazine"
(Since 1987)

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FBI Probes WebCom Outage
Ex-IBMers SUE IRS
MERGER MADNESS IN '97

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The Publisher, Staff & Editors

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Results: 12/14/96: 4 of 6 numbers, 3 three number matches

From the Editor’s Desk...

Nintendo and Sony are the big story for this Holiday High Tech wise. and believe me.. this is more interesting than Churchill Downs. I’ve been told the wagers being made relative to which console will be the big seller for this Christmas Sales Season are getting quite serious. One person told me the bets were as large as some of the bids for that tickly thing.

I’d like to think that all of you are truly carrying the real spirit of this Holiday Season in your hearts and living it at the same time. Imagine if each and every one of us were to live the rest of the year with the same attitude we develop for the Holiday Season. The world would be a wonderfully changed place.

Merry Christmas to one and all. Please, have a safe and Happy Holiday.

Of Special Note:

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STReport is now ready to offer much more in the way of serving the Networks, Online Services and Internet’s vast, fast growing site list and userbase. We now have our very own WEB/NewsGroup/FTP Site and although it is in its early stages of construction, do stop by and have a look see. Since We’ve received numerous requests to receive STReport from a wide variety of Internet addressees, we were compelled to put together an Internet distribution/mailing list for those who wished to receive STReport on a regular basis, the file is ZIPPED, then UUENCODED. Unfortunately, we’ve also received a number of opinions that the UUENCODING was a real pain to deal with. So, as of October 01, 1995, you’ll be able to download STReport directly from our very own SERVER & WEB Site. While there, be sure to join our STR AutoMailer list.

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STReport Headline News

LATE BREAKING INDUSTRY-WIDE NEWS

Weekly Happenings in the Computer World

Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Americans Split on V-Chip

The issue of V-chips -- the technology that will allow parents to block out certain TV programs -- apparently is splitting the American public. A new survey by the Freedom Forum Media Studies Center/Roper Center finds 49 percent of respondents say they would be likely to use the device, while 50 percent say they would probably ignore it, according to United Press International. As reported, TV manufacturers must place V-chip technology

in new sets within the next few years under the Telecommunications Act of 1996. The device automatically blocks programs according to a certain rating.

In other results, the poll also found:

´• Three in five respondents said a television ratings system would be useful to them.
´• More than half say the current movie ratings system is "very" useful in helping them decide what movies to watch.
´• Three-fourths of those surveyed would support a content-based rating system, against the 15 percent who like the idea of a system based on ag e.

UPI says the survey of 1,000 Americans was conducted Dec. 2-10 and has a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

Ex-IBMers Suing the IRS

More than 2,000 former employees of IBM are set to sue the Internal Revenue Service to try to win back $46 million in taxes they paid on severance benefits. "Echoing a suit filed in March on behalf of 750 ex-IBM workers," says business writer David E. Kalish of The Associated Press, "the group contends the severance they received amounted to a settlement of personal injury claims because they had to sign a document releasing IBM from liability when they left." AP notes that under IRS rules, settlement of personal injury claims are exempt from federal income taxes.

The wire service has learned the new plaintiffs plan to file a lawsuit in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in Washington on Monday. The suit claims the job cuts "subjected IBM employees to considerable pain and suffering," and that workers experienced "a variety of emotional and physical symptms, including insomnia and other sleep disorders, weight gain, headaches, hypertension, heart trouble and other trauma." AP says the plaintiffs also allege their stress hurt their families -- driving up alcoholism and causing marital problems, including sexual dysfunction.

Judge Rules on Net Gambling

A judge in Minnesota has ruled the state can regulate betting on the Internet, a decision observers say could have a far- reaching effects on online gambling and the World Wide Web itself. At issue is state Attorney General Hubert H. Humphrey III’s efforts to block a Las Vegas company from soliciting gambling business on the Internet from Minnesota residents. Humphrey has contended sports betting on the Internet is illegal under Minnesota’s consumer fraud laws.

On the other side of the issue, Granite Gate Resorts Inc. argues the state had no jurisdiction, claiming that the service had not mailed anything or advertised in Minnesota. It also contends states cannot impose laws on each other. On this point, Granite Gate President Kerry Rogers has said, "If Minnesota has jurisdiction over a Las Vegas Web site, then Canada has jurisdiction over a California Web site."

However, Associated Press writer Rochelle Olson reports State District Judge John Connolly yesterday came down on the side of the state, calling Granite Gate’s argument "not sound in the age of cyberspace." In his decision, Judge Connolly wrote, "Once the defendants place an advertisement on the Internet, that advertisement is available 24 hours a day, seven

days a week, 365 days a year to any Internet user until the defendants take it off the Internet."

Olson notes the company online offered computer users betting information on sporting events if they provided a credit card number or called its 900 number, and promised to set up a service in which people could place bets. UCLA law professor Eugene Volokh, who specializes in constitutional, copyright and computer technology cases, told the wire service the decision will "set a mood" as judges i other regions grapple with Internet law. He said the ruling wasn't a surprise. Although the federal government has ultimate jurisdiction over interstate commerce, he said, states have widespread powers to regulate themselves.

Prodigy Gets E-Mail Injunction

The Prodigy online service has joined CompuServe and America Online in the court battles against Cyber Promotions Inc. and its use of e-mail to send advertisements and other unsolicited promotions to subscribers. Prodigy officials have received a permanent injunction against Cyber Promotions to stop sending online ads and promotions through that service and an order to cease using Prodigy's name in its e-mail.

As reported here earlier, CompuServe last October obtained a restraining order to prohibit Cyber Promotions from falsely identifying its electronic mail as coming from CompuServe. And AOL also has been to court to fight the online ad firm. Writing for the Newsbytes computer news service, Bill Pietrucha says the latest ruling came as the result of a suit filed by Prodigy against Cyber Promotions in the US District Court, Southern District of New York about six weeks ago.

Prodigy spokesman Mike Darcy told the wire service that while Cyber Promotions was using Prodigy accounts as its return e-mail address, the company actually was mailing the advertisements from its own server. Cyber Promotions was ordered to immediately cease using Prodigy's name to deliver e-mail advertisements and to pay Prodigy an undisclosed amount in damages.

WebCom Trashed by 'Syn-Flood'

One of the nation's larger Internet service providers was shut down for 40 hours over the weekend -- blocking access to more than 3,000 World Wide Web sites -- because of a computer vandal's stream of messages. At Santa Cruz, California-based WebCom, officials told Elizabeth Weise of The Associated Press no one has any idea why someone launched what's known as a "denial of service" attack, which began 12:20 a.m. Saturday.

Weiss said the assault blocked service by sending as many as 200 messages a second to the WebCom server, or host computer. "The offending messages were traced to CANet, an Internet service provider based in Ontario, Canada, and from there to BC.Net, a small network provider in Vancouver, British Columbia," she reports, adding, "WebCom believes the attack was launched from a BC.Net account that had been broken into by an unknown party."

WebCom engineers were unable to stop the flood of messages, so MCI Communications Corp. blocked all traffic from CANet to WebCom, finally allowing WebCom customers' sites to come back online at 4 p.m. Sunday. "This was a completely irresponsible act by whoever did it that inflicted major damage upon hundreds and thousands of individuals and businesses," said Thomas Leavitt, WebCom's lead network engineer, adding, "If we can find out who it was, we will seek legal redress."

This kind of attack involves sending a continuous stream of forged messages to a targeted computer, keeping it constantly busy and locking out legitimate users. It’s called a "SYN-flood," Weise notes, because it exploits the so-called "synchronization feature" of the transmission control protocol, the agreed-upon set of rules by which the Internet runs.

"SYN-flood attacks are technically sophisticated and formerly only a few hackers had the necessary technical skills to attempt them," AP observes. "A few months ago, however, two hacker magazines published the source code for this type of attack and at least four networks have been hit since then." Dale Drew, a senior security engineer with MCI who helped WebCom trace the attack, told the wire service, "As soon as the code was published, anyone, whether or not they had the talent, could basically take down a network."

FBI Probes WebCom Outage

The FBI has been called in to investigate charges that sabotage caused that 40-hour outage last weekend at one of the nation’s larger Internet service providers. As reported, service at Web Communications Inc. (WebCom), a Silicon Valley service hosting 3,000 World Wide Web sites, was shut down because of a computer vandal’s stream of messages. WebCom said it believes a vandal using a college computer network in British Columbia, Canada, flooded its server, a central computer, in San Jose, California, with requests for connections from phony addresses. The attack ended Sunday after MCI Net, a unit of MCI Communications Corp., blocked telephone traffic between WebCom and CA-Net of Canada at the request of WebCom and its local service provier.

WebCom Vice President Thomas Leavitt told the Reuter News Service the sites the company hosts were unreachable much of Saturday and Sunday, causing customers, some of which operate retail sites, to suffer "extensive" damages. "One customer," he said, "lost about $20,000 in revenue due to a special event that was not able to occur. Others said they lost business on one of the busiest shopping weekends of the year."

WebCom, headquartered in Santa Cruz, California, told authorities its own investigation helped by three Internet service providers traced the origin of the flooding message to a computer on a college network in British Columbia linked to BC-Net, a local Internet service provider there. Leavitt said a network administrator at Malaspina University-College in Nanaimo, British Columbia, had identified the computer used for the sabotage and that it was broken into by someone without authorized access to that computer or to the college network. The individual has not been identified.

FBI spokesman George Grotz told the wire service the FBI was working with the information tracing the requests for connection to British Columbia but noted the actual perpetrator may have nothing to do with the college or BC-Net, adding, "BC-Net may just be another link in the case." Leavitt also told Reuters that if the industry, or specifically Internet service providers, adopt certain "source filtering" coding they can prevent people from using one network to send messages that appear to come from somewhere else.

Computer Firm Is ’Erased’

It isn’t every day a computer company gets "erased," but that’s what police say happened to Digital Technologies Group, a small Internet service

provider and computer design company in Hartford, Connecticut. The Associated Press says authorities have arrested a man who lost his job at the company just before the problems started. "One night in October," says AP, "the company's owner, Mark Ambrose, was at home trying to call up the company's home page on the Internet's World Wide Web when an error message flashed on the screen. When he tried to retrieve one of his major accounts, the file was gone. Ambrose then rushed to the office to log on to the system, only to find more error messages."

Ambrose says everything was deleted, even the backup copies, and that the company lost about $17,000 in business equipment and records. Months of work were also gone. The business was closed for a week while a new computer system was set up. Only someone with intimate knowledge of the company's system, including client and employee passwords, could have created such havoc, Ambrose reasoned, leading him and police to suspect Charles Morrell, the primary computer technician, who was handed a pink slip the day before the computer files started disappearing.

Morrell -- who was let go because the work he had been hired to do was completed -- was arrested yesterday on a charge of computer crime. He was accused of sabotaging the business by infiltrating the computer system from home. He could face up to 20 years in prison. However, the charges are "totally baseless," contends Morrell lawyer Richard E. Cohen, who say the situation stems from a business dispute.

PGP IPO Set for Mid-1997

Officials with Pretty Good Privacy Inc., which makes computer encryption software, say the firm is on track to hold an initial public offering in the middle of next year, and that its market position was strong. As reported earlier, at this week's Internet World trade show in New York, programmer Philip Zimmermann -- who was investigated by the federal government for three years because his encryption software given away over the Internet was classified as a weapon -- announced he was launching a commercial venture and going public.

Now PGP Inc. President/CEO Thomas Steding has told the Reuter News Service, "In general, the company is more than six months ahead of schedule," adding the San Mateo, California, firm is in the process of raising its second round of financing, after receiving an initial tranche of about $7 million from a variety of private sources in August. Said Steding, "We want to do an initial public offering in the middle of next year. We've been fairly open about that." When asked about the company's cash position, he said, "We are raising on the order of $10 million." Reuters says Pretty Good Privacy also projected both the e-mail and desktop encryption markets -- two key markets for the company -- would each grow to $1 billion by the year 2000.

Judge Says Encryption Is a Right

A federal judge in San Francisco has ruled a government export ban against encrypted computer programs is a violation of First Amendment rights. Judge Marilyn Hall Patel rules U.S. citizens have wide-ranging rights involving computer programs dealing with encryption, and can even publish them on the Internet. Writing in The Wall Street Journal this morning, reporter Lee Gomes calls the decision "a setback to a controversial federal law that treats encryption programs as weapons, strictly controlling their dissemination and prohibiting their 'export' without a special license."

The ruling isn't binding on other courts and is the second by Judge Patel

this year involving the encryption controversy. Last April, she ruled the law banning encryption exports could be challenged on First Amendment grounds. "That ruling," says Gomes, "was primarily procedural, but set the stage for yesterday's more far-reaching order." The latest decision comes in a case brought by math professor Daniel Bernstein of the University of Illinois-Chicago. As reported, the State Department in 1993 prohibited Bernstein from posting on the Internet an encryption program he had written, called Snuffle. Bernstein argued that the ban violated his free speech, and Judge Patel concurred. Said the judge's 41-page ruling, "Software related to encryption is simply a topic of speech employed by scientists involved in applied research. Hence, Snuffle is speech afforded the full protection of the First Amendment."

Look for a government Appeal.

Attorney James Wheaton, representing Dr. Bernstein, notes the decision applied only to citizens dealing with encryption programs in noncommercial settings, adding companies might still be prohibited from exporting encryption software, because there is a lower constitutional threshold for banning commercial activity.

Some in the software industry argue the government's policy has blunted their competitiveness because they are prevented from selling strong security software abroad while foreign companies can sell encryption software unfettered. Also, they say, the export controls on encryption could stunt the growth of electronic commerce over the Internet, which requires such security if online banking and transactions are to flourish.

President/CEO Jim Bidzos of RSA Data Security Inc., a unit of Security Dynamics Technology Inc. and one of the foremost producers of encryption technology, told the paper, "It's obviously wonderful news. But I'm not going to be exporting any source code tomorrow."

Adobe Offers New Type Packages

Adobe Systems Inc. has significantly expanded its Adobe Type Library. The San Jose, California, company is now offering 12 new typeface packages, including multiple master versions Kepler, Kepler Expert, Conga Brava, Cronos and Cronos Expert. Also available is Adobe Jenson for Windows in an expanded multiple master type family. Adobe notes that each multiple master typeface includes one or more design axes -- weight, width, style and optical size -- that allw the creation of thousands of individual font renditions.

"The wide variety and outstanding versatility of these new Adobe Originals packages add creative liveliness to many kinds of design projects and the Adobe Type Library," says Sharon Wienbar, director of Adobe's type products unit. The new typeface packages can be viewed and purchased on Adobe's Web site, http://www.adobe.com/type.

Updated PageMaker Ships

Adobe Systems Inc. has begun shipping Adobe PageMaker 6.5, a new version of its professional-level desktop publishing program for Windows 95 and Windows NT 4.0 systems. The enhanced software includes new online publishing tools and page design features, as well as improved integration with Adobe's other graphics products. PageMaker 6.5 is priced at $895. Upgrades from any previous version of PageMaker cost $99.

Royalty-Free Images Debut on CSi

CompuServe Interactive (CSi) now brings thousands of high- resolution, royalty-free images direct to small businesses, communications professionals and Web designers worldwide with the debut of a new Forum, the CompuServe Picture Gallery (GO PICTURE). Launched by the U.K.'s largest Internet provider, the Picture Gallery gives more than 3 million CSi members access to thousands of world-class images -- without the fees associated with traditional stock library photography. The pictures are available as low-resolution thumbnails for browsing and high-resolution, 24-bit, razor-sharp images to download and use. "This is a great example of how CompuServe adds value to the online experience through compelling content, particularly for small businesses," says Martin Turner, CompuServe UK's general manager.

Photographs in the Picture Gallery can be chosen from a number of categories including, Business & Industry, Cities, Food, Leisure, People, Nature, Transport, The Americas, Asia, Africa and Europe, as well as Backgrounds. All images are scanned to 24-bit color at 2,100 dpi to stringent quality control standards.

To access the CompuServe Picture Gallery GO PICTURE, PICTURES or IMAGES. For more information about the service and to sample full-sized images, visit the Web site at www.picture-gallery.com.

OS/2 Navigator Released

IBM Corp. reports that a native OS/2 version of the Netscape Navigator World Wide Web browser is now available. Running on OS/2 Warp 4, the new software allows users to surf the Internet with simple voice commands. Without voice support, the software also runs on OS/2 Warp Version 3 and OS/2 Warp Connect. It is available as a free download from both the Netscape home page at www.netscape.com and the IBM Software home page at www.software.ibm.com.

"The marriage of the industry's most popular Web browser with the industry's premier client operating system solution for network computing-based environments is ideal," says Donn Atkins, vice president of marketing for IBM Personal Software Products. IBM says it will continue to work with Netscape on the development of native OS/2 versions of upgrades to Navigator 2.02, including version 4.0, code-named "Communicator."

C&T Has Plasma Display Interface

Chips and Technologies Inc. reports that it has developed a computer graphics interface for Fujitsu's 42-inch Color Plasma Display. The Fujitsu display is the world's largest commercially available color plasma panel for multimedia presentations and wide-screen television viewing. Chips and Technologies' plasma display panel controller software will allow standard personal computers to drive the Fujitsu display. Potential applications, leveraging the convergence of television entertainment and computer graphics, included videoconferencing, distance learning, multimedia presentations, 3-D simulation, point-of-presence displays, video walls, video game arcades, home theater systems and set-top box Internet displays.

Compared with heavy and bulky CRT monitors, the Fujitsu Color Plasma Display is only 68mm deep and weighs only 18kg. At a fraction of the depth and weight of a comparably sized CRT monitor, large-screen plasma panels can serve as practical wall-hanging displays. "Flat panel technology clearly represents the future of both television and computer displays," says Tim Erjavec, director of marketing at Chips and Technologies.

Chips and Technologies says it adapted its 64-bit HiQVideo graphics accelerator hardware to the unique requirements of the Fujitsu display by developing new prorietary software. The display's unusual requirements include a non-standard 852- by 480-dot resolution, a very wide 16:9 aspect ratio (4:3 is standard on computer displays), 16.7 million true colors and a non-standard timing frequency. More details are available on Chips and Technologies' Web page, www.chips.com.

3-D Shopping Arcade Launched

VRcade, the new-look 3-D shopping center from CompuServe Inc. is now open for business. Believed to be the world's first commercial application of virtual reality technology on the Internet, VRcade was built by virtual reality software specialist Superscape VR as part of a major deal to distribute its 3-D Web browser, Viscape, through CompuServe Interactive (CSi). CSi is offering members a 60 day evaluation copy of Viscape.

The 3-D UK shopping center -- complete with a Christmas tree and lights for the festive season - is the latest addition to CompuServe's suite of Web-based products. VRcade is based on London's Piccadilly Circus shopping area, with links to in-town and out-of-town shopping "worlds" to which the shopper can travel by jumping into a black cab or going to an underground train station. Millions of online shoppers outside the UK can also take a virtual shopping trip to London's Piccadilly Circus -- stores which deliver to international addresses outside the U.K. include Interflora, Waterstones, Shoppers Universe, Innovations and the Jaguar Collection.

"I firmly believe a more realistic, compelling 3D environment will make the shopping center on CSi even more attractive to potential merchants and on-line shoppers," says Chris Warrender, commercial services manager for CompuServe U.K. "We want to provide the ultimate online shopping experience for our members -- and our partners."

Steve Jobs May Upgrade Mac OS

Apple Computer Inc. co-founder Steve Jobs reportedly is one of the people the computer maker has negotiated with as it tries to update its graying Macintosh operating system. Word is Apple will unveil its new software strategy at the MacWold expo in San Francisco early next month and, says The Wall Street Journal, recently discussed with Jobs the possibility of buying or licensing software from Next Inc, the company he founded after leaving Apple in 1985.

As reported, Apple also has been in talks with Be Inc. about using its operating system, but those discussions have stalled over price, according to several published reports. Also, Apple has talked with Sun Microsystems Inc. about using its Solaris operating system, according to the paper. Jobs acknowledged talking to Apple but downplayed the discussion, telling the paper, "I've given them a little bit of advice, but that's about it." As noted, Apple is trying to revamp the operating system for its Macintosh personal computers, which have lost ground to PCs using Intel Corp. chips and Microsoft Corp. software.

Gateway Ad to Court Women

Women -- largely ignored by computer manufacturers -- are being targeted by Gateway 2000 Inc. in advertising campaigns for its personal computers and related products. Luanne Flikkema, Gateway's director of global research, told the Reuter News Service, "I think you can expect to see our ads be a

little less male and a little more diverse in terms of gender." In a recent study using Gateway surveys and focus groups and other research, Flikkema found women play a significant role in purchasing a PC for the home.

In fact, she said, women are more likely to control the family finances, making them an important sell, adding, "The biggest reason why women shouldn't be ignored is if Mom's head isn't nodding up and down, the PC doesn't get bought. If you can't convince her it's worth spending that money, there is not going to be a PC in the home." For instance, a random survey of about 1,200 people found 47 percent of the time the male head of household played the major role in the purchase, 22 percent of the time it was the female and 28 percent of the time the purchase was handled equally by the male and female. Children drove purchases 3 percent of the time, Gateway found.

Survey Says WebTV Not Hot

WebTV and other products providing simpler and cheaper access to the Internet by television may be a media darling, but a new survey says the concept isn't catching on with average households. Market researchers at Dataquest Inc. say that in a telephone survey of nearly 7,000 home consumers they've found:

´• Only 4 percent of America's 98 million households currently plan to purchase a TV Internet device.
´• Some 3 percent were undecided.
´• 93 percent had no intention of purchasing such devices.

Van Baker, director and princpal analyst of Dataquest's digital consumer program, told the Reuter News Service, "As it stands right now, with the products that are currently being offered in the market, we think the potential for it is relatively small." The wire service notes the survey comes just weeks after the launch of WebTV, a set-top box which enables consumers to access the Internet through WebTV Networks Inc.'s service, and at the height of the pre-Christmas shopping season.

"The report contrasted with a Yankelovich Partners Inc. survey in October which found that 52 percent of respondents without Internet access would prefer to use their TV to access the World Wide Web," Reuters adds. "The Yankelovich survey was sponsored by WebTV Networks and WebTV Vice President of Marketing Chip Herman said he found the Dataquest data to be 'quite surprising' compared with the earlier survey's findings of a preference for television access."

Reuters notes roughly a third of U.S. households have personal computers, although only around 10 percent of all households use online or Internet services, according to surveys. But Baker notes the Dataquest data appears "to conflict with anecdotal feedback from some retailers that it was hard to keep sufficient stocks of the WebTV devices, marketed by Sony Corp. and Philips Electronics NV."

AAA Makes Preparations Should Santa Need Tow On Christmas Eve!

ORLANDO, Fla., Dec. 19 /PRNewswire/ -- Santa's sleigh is not exactly the newest vehicle in the sky and concern over possible breakdowns has led the 39-million-member AAA to raise the preparedness level of its emergency road service fleet in case jolly old St. Nick needs a tow on Christmas Eve. AAA wants children everywhere to go to sleep knowing that one way or

another Santa will get through.

With gifts for an estimated 35 million American children who believe in Santa, his sleigh will be laden with goodies like "Tickle Me Elmo" and "Nintendo-64" -- roughly five pounds of toys per child. This will put a hefty load on Santa's sleigh -- some 17 million pounds, depending on wrappings.

Though an antique, Santa's sleigh has to be well built to withstand the rigors of so many rooftop landings. So AAA estimates the vehicle's weight at 4,000 pounds -- about the same as an old chrome-laden Buick. Not counting Santa -- who is, admittedly, a tad overweight -- the fully stocked sleigh, eight reindeer and, of course, Rudolph, probably weigh in at some 177 million pounds -- equivalent to 221 Boeing 747s.

Should an indicator light on Santa's "Dash" burn bright and cause him to pull over, AAA will first pinpoint his sleigh with an automatic vehicle location device, then mobilize its fleet of more than 13,000 tow trucks. Working together, they can handle 200 million pounds -- more than enough to tote Santa and his entourage to the nearest sleigh repair facility. In fact, technicians have been scrambling for weeks, trying to obtain a manual on how to jump start a reindeer.

Even if Santa's sleigh is working perfectly on Christmas Eve, AAA estimates Santa's flying reindeer are real "hay burners" and will need at least 150 fill-ups. With the December average price of hay at $4.283 per bale, Santa's driving costs will be $5,782.05 -- a hefty sum for a one person-trip. At the end of such a busy evening, should Santa be too exhausted to make it all the way back to the North Pole, AAA wants to let him know that there are 9,900 AAA-listed lodgings in North America that allow pets. Some even allow sleighs.

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A T T E N T I O N-A T T E N T I O N-A T T E N T I O N

EDUPAGE STR Focus Keeping the users informed

Edupage

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DATABASE COPYRIGHT AGREEMENT: NOT ANY TIME SOON

U.S. Patent & Trademark Commissioner Bruce Lehman says that most of the 160 member countries participating in a Geneva meeting of the World Intellectual Property Organization want to postpone consideration of a proposed treaty on database copyright. Instead, they want to concentrate on two other draft agreements: one being an update of the 25-year-old Bern Convention and the other being the so-called "new instrument" proposal, which for the first time would extend international copyright

protection to sound recordings. But even those proposals face an uncertain feature, according to Lehman: "Frankly, we are having an awful lot of difficulties with the other two treaties, and this meeting ends on Dec. 20th." (New York Times 14 Dec 96 p26)

COMPUTER TARIFFS TO BE ABOLISHED

Countries meeting under the auspices of the World Trade Organization have agreed to eliminate tariffs on computers, software and related goods - a boon for U.S. high-tech companies hoping to peddle their wares overseas. "This could mean $100 million a year at least for IBM," says IBM's public policy director. Microsoft's chief operating officer agrees: "This will be a win-win for every country and every consumer." The agreement was reached after the U.S. agreed to lower tariffs on European cognac, whiskey and other liquors. Officials predict that global trade in information technology products, which is now about $500 billion a year, will double to $1 trillion a year by 2000. The pact covers some 500 products, including fax machines, calculators, CD-ROMs, and automatic-teller machines. (Wall Street Journal13 Dec 96 A2)

DUTY-FREE ZONE PROPOSED FOR E-COMMERCE

The Clinton administration has proposed establishing a duty-free trade zone for electronic commerce, according to a recently released draft report entitled "A Framework for Global Electronic Commerce." The report recommends developing a Uniform Commercial Code for both domestic and international electronic transactions, and international intellectual property protection agreements. The report also urges governments not to place "undue restrictions on electronic commerce," including "unnecessary regulations, bureaucratic procedures, or new taxes and tariffs on commercial activities that take place via the Internet." The framework encourages governments to respect the decentralized nature of the Internet, and the fact that the "Internet's unique structure poses significant logistical and technological challenges to current regulatory models." (BNA Daily Report for Executives 12 Dec 96 A33)

SCAMS ON THE NET

Federal Trade Commission officials say that a three-hour hunt this week for scams on the Internet identified more than 500 Web sites that may be fronts for illegal pyramid schemes. Says the FTC's Jodie Bernstein: "Ten years ago, pyramid scams were all but a thing of the past. Today we have a new marketplace, the Internet, which is hot and high-tech. ... And here come the old pyramid scams again, disguised in electronic garb and New Age jargon and trying to make a comeback." (PC Week 13 Dec 96)

DIGITAL SLASHES ALPHA CHIP PRICES IN HALF

Digital Equipment has cut the price of its Alpha chip by as much as 50% in an effort to boost sales. Despite being one of the world's fastest microprocessors, the Alpha has been unsuccessful in cutting into sales of Intel Pentium chips, which now power about 85% of the world's PCs. (Investor's Business Daily 13 Dec 96 A17)

VIRTUAL SUPERCOMPUTER

Andrew Grimshaw at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville has designed a virtual parallel supercomputer with mix-and-match components (including traditional supercomputers, modern parallel computers, workstations, and a variety of types of personal computers) distributed across the Internet. His system, which now includes more than 100 computers from different manufacturers, appears to its users as a single machine that hides the peculiarities of the particular operating systems of the component systems. (The Economist 14 Dec 96)

COMCAST LAUNCHES @HOME SERVICE IN BALTIMORE

Comcast is offering a localized version of the @Home cable online service to about 500,000 subscribers in Maryland's Baltimore and Howard counties. The company plans to gradually expand the service in Maryland, and over the next couple of years offer it to subscribers in Florida, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Michigan and California. In all cases, the cable company is creating localized content -- in Baltimore, for instance, subscribers can take a virtual tour of The Walters Art Gallery or browse material from the Baltimore magazine. (Broadcasting & Cable 9 Dec 96 p108)

JUNK E-MAIL UPDATE

Prodigy has reached an understanding with junk e-mail promoter Sanford Wallace, who has promised not to open any new Prodigy accounts and has agreed to pay the company an undisclosed sum in settlement of a trademark infringement case it brought against his Cyber Promotions company. Wallace, who sends more than 3 million e-mail messages daily to persons throughout the Internet, will still be allowed to send messages to Prodigy subscribers. (Atlanta Journal-Constitution 14 Dec 96 H3)

LABOUR'S WEB SITE VIOLATED

A computer hacker in the U.S. has broken into the World Wide Web site of Britain's Labour party, changed the content of the masthead, and replaced the image of Labour Leader Tony Blair with a caricature. (Financial Times 12 Dec 96)

E-MAIL STALKER

A Florida man has been sentenced to a year's probation and 200 hours of community service after pleading no-contest to a charge of using his computer for stalking another individual. The man claims he was just joking when he sent the individual a series of threatening e-mail messages, one of which said: "How do you want to die! I know your wife. I know where you live. Weasels will rip your flesh." Police were able to trace the messages after contacting the man's Internet Service Provider. (Washington Post 13 Dec 96)

DOE/INTEL SUPERCOMPUTER NOW FASTEST ON EARTH

A new $55 million supercomputer designed by the U.S. Department of Energy and Intel Corporation can perform one trillion floating point operations (teraflops) per second, and will be used to simulate nuclear weapons tests now banned by international treaty. The system is about three times faster than the current record-holder, a supercomputer made by Hitachi. The new supercomputer uses a "massively parallel computing" design that links 7,264 Pentium-based desktop computers to operate as one machine. IBM and Silicon Graphics are using different technologies in separate projects aimed at developing 3-teraflop machines by early 1999. (Washington Post 17 Dec 96 A1)

WEB ATTACK KNOCKS OUT SITES

A "denial of service" computer attack, similar to the one that shut down Panix computers in New York for more than a week last September, disabled servers at Santa Cruz-based WebCom, one of the nation's larger Web service providers. The attack, which WebCom suspects was launched via a small network provider in Vancouver, British Columbia, sent as many as 200 messages a second to WebCom's server, disabling it for 40 hours this past weekend. The outage was particularly hard on Web sites that were counting on weekend sales to boost their Christmas revenue. (St. Petersburg Times 17 Dec 96 E1)

AOL PROBLEMS TO CONTINUE FOR AWHILE

America Online says it will be another six months before it finishes a $250-

million systems upgrade that will put an end to the frequent busy signals and unexpected disconnections AOL users have been experiencing since a lowered subscriber price plan resulted in major increases in system use. (Atlanta Journal-Constitution 16 Dec 96 C6) But the problems are not limited to AOL. Millions of subscribers to computer network services are experiencing frustrations with network congestion that accelerated after a number of service providers began offering their customers unlimited Internet access for $19.95 a month. (New York Times 17 Dec 96 C1)

FCC MAY REVISIT ACCESS CHARGES FOR INTERNET PROVIDERS

Citing a 13-year-old access charge exemption for "enhanced service providers," the FCC's general counsel has recommended looking into the matter to determine whether a price distortion is occurring as an unintended result, now that Internet usage is growing at such phenomenal rates. Currently, Internet service providers are not required to pay local carriers to connect calls to the local loop -- a provision enacted back when the enhanced service provider industry was in its infancy. But some telecommunications companies are complaining that their lines are being unfairly overburdened by Internet users who tie up lines for hours at a time or all day, without any compensation. Various industry players have called for an end to flat-fee Internet pricing as a way to make the system reflect the real costs of individual usage patterns. (BNA Daily Report for Executives 16 Dec 96 A24)

APPLE MEETS WITH NEXT IN SEARCH FOR NEW OS

With discussions with Be Inc. stalemated over price, Apple Computer has been looking further afield for its next-generation operating system. The company is negotiating with former chairman and co-founder Steve Jobs regarding the possibility of Apple buying or licensing Next's NextStep operating system, and reportedly is also talking with Sun Microsystems about its Solaris operating system. But time is running out, because Apple would like to make a definitive announcement at the MacWorld trade show, which will be held in three weeks in San Francisco. (Wall Street Journal 16 Dec 96 B6)

IBM & MOTOROLA DROP WINDOWS NT SUPPORT ON POWERPC

IBM and Motorola are discontinuing support for Microsoft's Windows NT operating system on the computers designed around their PowerPC chip, which the two companies developed in 1991 with Apple. Windows NT had been seen as the PowerPC's chance to find an audience beyond Macintosh and IBM Unix users. (New York Times 16 Dec 96 C4)

SIMON & SCHUSTER SETS THE BENCHMARK FOR DIGITAL ARCHIVING

In an effort to realize its goal of generating half of its revenues from electronic rather than traditional publishing by 2000, Simon & Schuster has invested $750,000 in a new Corporate Digital Archive system developed by SRA International Inc. The digital archive "will become the centerpiece of how we develop and produce everything as we move forward. It will give us the ability to reuse information over and over again," says the company's chairman. The system enables researchers in the in Higher Education department to access all 40,000 of the publisher's photos when looking for images to illustrate a textbook, for instance. The CDA can then tell another set of in-house systems to create a print-ready copy in just the right size and image resolution for the use specified (high for traditional print and low for the Web). The CDA then tracks the image's use, adding a "digital watermark" and automatically calculating any royalty payments. (Business Week 23 Dec 96 p80)

CABLEVISION LAUNCHES HIGH-SPEED MODEM SERVICE

Cablevision is offering subscribers in North Oyster Bay, N.Y., high-speed Internet access via cable modem. Over the coming year, the cable company plans to expand the Optimum Online service, which includes e- mail, sports information, traffic reports and other content, to 150,000 subscribers in Long Island and Connecticut. (Wall Street Journal 17 Dec 96 B6)

ORACLE'S PROJECT APOLLO TARGETS E-COMMERCE

Following the lead of Hewlett-Packard and Sun Microsystems, Oracle will launch its Java-based merchant server, code-named Project Apollo, during the first quarter of 1997. Apollo will offer secure shopping, automatic tax calculations, and multiple payment options to online buyers. Apollo sites will collect site visitor information for use in target marketing and profiling, and will also be capable of integrating with companies' existing information systems. (InfoWorld 16 Dec 96)

BETTER THAN AVERAGE

U.S. News & World Report says that one poll of university professors found that 94% of the respondents thought that they were better at their jobs than their average colleague. (U.S. News & World Report 16 Dec 96 p26)

ENCRYPTION RESTRICTIONS RULED UNCONSTITUTIONAL

A federal district judge in San Francisco has ruled that the U.S. government's attempt to prevent Illinois math professor David J. Bernstein from exporting an encryption program he created is an unconstitutional restriction of his right to freedom of expression. Bernstein had wanted to share his program with researchers around the world. The Clinton Administration has insisted that tough restriction on exportation of encryption software is necessary to foil criminals and terrorists. The decision of Judge Marilyn Hall Patel was based on the fact that the law fails to provide for prompt judicial review of export restrictions and thus acts as "unconstitutional prior restraint in violation of the First Amendment." (Washington Post 19 Dec 96 A1)

FCC HAS PLANS FOR SLASHING OVERSEAS PHONE RATE

The Federal Communications Commission has developed a new set of substantially lower benchmark settlement fees," which are the payments that phone companies make to each other for completing each their calls. Because U.S. carriers send more calls overseas than they receive, the system results in a net outflow of $5 billion from the U.S. to foreign phone service providers, who in many cases have used the funds to build their own networks. Some analysts say that the FCC plan could harm developing countries, which have the least competitive phone markets. (New York Times 19 Dec 96 C4)

NETCOM ABANDONS FLAT-RATE PRICING

After two years of being in the red, California-based Internet service provider Netcom On-Line Communications Services is doing away with its flat-rate pricing plan for unlimited Internet access, and will raise rates in order to provide more services and more software. Netcom chief executive David Garrison said: "We decided we could chase the industry and continue to spend more and more to provide lower and lower quality." Garrison now says that flat-price plans are "crazy." (Wall Street Journal 19 Dec 96 B10)

LOSING INFORMATION

Almost eight out of 10 companies surveyed across North American by Ernst & Young say they have lost valuable information over the past two years to computer viruses, crackers, bitter employees, spies or disasters. Most of those losses -- 63% -- were the result of viruses, while nearly one-third were caused by the malicious acts of insiders. The vast majority of

companies refused to say how much money they lost, but E&Y director John Kearns says those losses were significant. Of the 30% that would describe their losses, 4% say they lost between $250,000 and $1-million, while 2% said they lost more than $1-million. (Toronto Globe & Mail 17 Dec 96 B15)

EXTENSION OF CHIP-DUMPING AGREEMENT

The U.S. Semiconductor Industry Association and the Electronic Industries Association of Japan have concurred on extending the 1991 agreement not to sell "commodity" chips (DRAMS or E-PROMS) at anti- competitive below-cost prices. DRAM stands for Dynamic Random Access Memory, and E-PROM stands for Electronically Programmable Read-Only Memory). The 1991 agreement was forged after U.S. chip manufacturers were severely hurt by chip-dumping practices in the 1980s. (Wall Street Journal 19 Dec 96 B11)

MERGER MADNESS IN ’97

An astonishing 72% of North American information technology firms are planning a merger or acquisition in the coming year, says Broadview Associates L.L.C., a New Jersey-based M&A adviser. That’s up from the 64% that responded positively last year in a poll of 175 senior executives in strategic development positions in IT companies. Most of the anticipated activity can be traced to the influence of the Internet, with telecommunications companies buying Internet service providers, software developers acquiring Net surfing specialists, etc. (Investor’s Business Daily 19 Dec 96 A8)

CLEANING UP THE "GARBAGE IN, GARBAGE OUT" SYNDROME

Data warehousing -- the storage of a variety of data about customers, buying patterns, inventory supply, seasonal trends, etc. -- is yielding powerful marketing information to businesses that take the time and trouble to ensure the data they warehouse is accurate. Without high-quality data, "there can be no useful data mining for trend analysis, no targeted business and consumer marketing initiatives, and no effective data warehouse," says the president of Vality Technology, a data cleansing firm. Such firms analyze data for possible errors and duplicate values and then attempt to correct them, a process that’s especially crucial when multiple legacy systems are consolidated into one data warehouse. According to the Meta Group, the market for data-cleansing tools will approach $1 billion by 2001. (Information Week 16 Dec 96 p88)

BUSINESSES RELUCTANT TO TRY E-COMMERCE

U.S. businesses are reluctant to set up shop on the Internet, although consumers are becoming more willing to try electronic commerce, according to an AT&T survey. Nearly 40% of adults polled said they expect to make purchases on the Internet next year, and 55% say they expect to shop online within the next five years, according to the first-time survey conducted by Odyssey, a San Francisco-based Internet research firm. Of the 2,003 American adults surveyed, 7% said they already have made online purchases, while 20% said they use the Internet for information about products. Of the 503 executives surveyed, 20% expressed concern that "customers aren’t ready" for electronic commerce. While 33% predicted the Internet will be a significant marketing tool in five years, only 17% said online sales are "very important" to their businesses today. The study found that 45% of American adults, or 80-million people, have access to commercial online or Internet-based services through home or work, while about 71% have access to personal computers. (Ottawa Citizen 12 Dec 96 D13)

INTERNET TV -- AN IDEA BEFORE ITS TIME?

A Dataquest Inc. poll of 7,000 households indicates that a whopping 93% of the respondents are not interested in buying an Internet-enabled TV set or set-top box. Furthermore, while companies such as WebTV have primarily

targeted consumers who don't yet own a PC, the Dataquest survey results indicate that households with PCs are more likely to buy an Internet device that works with their television set than ones without. (Investor's Business Daily 18 Dec 96 A6)

BATTLE HEATS UP OVER CYBERSPACE COPYRIGHTS

The music industry turned up the heat yesterday in its battle to protect copyrights on the Internet, accusing service providers of scare-mongering in an effort to protect their multi-billion interests. Online firms say new treaties to revise copyright laws to include cyberspace expose them to multi-billion dollar liabilities and give broad powers to music and other copyright-based businesses. The International Federation of the Phonographic Industry accused online firms of "turning the truth on its head," maintaining they have nothing to fear from the treaties. In Geneva, copyright industries are trying to ensure they get a portion from the distribution of literature, music, software and other commerce on the Internet. (Toronto Financial Post 17 Dec 96 p13)

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE

The CAUSE organization's annual conference on information technology in higher education is scheduled for the end of this month in New Orleans. The conference will bring together administrators, academicians and other managers of information resources. For full conference information check out <http://cause-www.colorado.edu > or send e-mail to conf@cause.colorado.edu.

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Image Mapper
Create image maps with a new WYSIWYG editor! See the "Image Maps" option in the "Special" menu

Convert word processor files to HTML
Check the "File" menu for the "Import word processor (.rtf) file" option and also the "Edit menu for the "Paste as HTML" option

Convert text files to HTML
Check the "File" menu for the "Import text file" option and also the "Edit menu for the "Paste as HTML" option

Built-in HTML viewer
To use the viewer simply check the box on any edit window button bar

Automatic detection of browsers
Pro 97 automatically checks your system for well-known browsers and makes them available as previewers. It also sets your default previewer to be the same as your current default browser.

Automatic calculation of picture size
Now, when you preview a GIF or JPEG picture, its size is automatically

calculated and corresponding WIDTH and HEIGHT parameters are created.

QuickFrames
Create Frame pages in seconds -- really! See the "QuickFrames" option in the "Special" menu

Customized startup template
When you create a new document you can have a default startup template automatically inserted into the document. Just create a file in your Pro 97 directory called Startup.templ containing your preferred startup template to take advantage of this feature.

Multiple file replace
Now it’s fast and easy to replace text in any number of files. You can quickly change a file name or directory in all your web site pages. Try the "Multiple file replace..." option in the "File" or "Edit" menus.

Background sound tag
You can create pages that include WAV and MIDI sound files via the BGSOUND tag, and preview the sounds while you are editing. See the sound related options under the "Special menu.

Video!
Create HTML pages with video clips! Look under the "Special" menu "Video clip" for this option.

User definable buttons
A new tool bar has been added where you can define your own buttons to quickly insert commonly used tags and other text.

Automatic file save and backup
HTML Assistant Pro 97 can save your files automatically so that valuable work won’t be lost. See the "Automatic file save" option in the "File" menu. Backup copies are created for all files loaded into HTML Assistant Pro 97, making it easy to revert to an earlier version. All backup files are stored in the "proback" subdirectory of the HTML Assistant Pro 97 program directory.

Object and scripting support
The new OBJECT tag for inserting ActiveX objects in a document is supported. The related tags and APPLET and EMBED are included also, as well as the SCRIPT tag.

Convert HTML tags to upper/lower case
Many HTML authors prefer creating tags in either all upper or all lower case. Now, if you get documents from elsewhere that use a preference different from your own, you can convert the tags to your favorite style with a click of a button!

Network aware!
HTML Assistant Pro 97 is fully network aware, allowing it to be installed on a network server and then used by multiple users without conflicts. Each user has their own private configuration files and the bulk of the program is shared by all users.

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´• Improved Undo and Redo - 255 levels!
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Corel Ships Academic Graphics Products for both Windows and Macintosh Platforms

For Immediate Release

OTTAWA, Canada -- December 12, 1996 -- Corel Corporation has begun shipping the Academic versions of CorelDRAWT 7 and CorelDRAWT 6 Suite for Power Macintoshr. Available for a suggested retail price of $139 US, the academic versions provide users with the same features and software as the standard retail shrink-wrap products. Academic versions are available in CD-ROM format only and manuals are sold separately. Both versions are currently available in English only, with French, Italian, German, Spanish, Dutch, Korean and Japanese versions of CorelDRAW 7 scheduled to become available in Q1 1997. French and German versions of CorelDRAW 6 Suite for Macintosh are also scheduled to be available within the same time frame.

"By offering incredible price points on our flagship graphics products to a variety of eligible institutions, we are ensuring that groups that might not otherwise have access to such state-of-the-art technology are able to in fact take advantage of it," said Dr. Michael Cowpland, president and chief executive officer of Corel Corporation.

CorelDRAW 7 and CorelDRAW 6 for Power Macintoshr (Academic Editions) are available to eligible students, faculty, educational institutions, museums, hospitals, public libraries, correctional institutions, senior citizens and non-profit organizations. Users may purchase Academic software and manuals from any Corel Authorized Academic Reseller. Manuals may also be purchased from Corel customer service at 613-728-3733. For more in-depth product information and to determine eligibility, please refer to the Education Division of Corel’s home pages at http://www.corel.com.

Corel Announces Release of New CorelXARAT Update

OTTAWA, Canada -- December 12, 1996 -- Corel Corporation announced today the availability of CorelXARAT 1.5, a new English-only update to versions 1.1 and 1.2. Registered CorelXARA customers may order the CD by contacting customer service at 1-800-772-6735. This new update will also be slipstreamed into existing product, which is available to new customers for a suggested retail price of $289 US. The update adds significant enhancements to the product, both for the traditional designer and for the increasing number of designers specializing in Web graphics.

Due to its ability to combine vector and bitmap graphics and to apply such unique special effects as transparency, CorelXARA allows users to produce high quality, distinctive graphic images. The original version of CorelXARA became a popular tool for Web graphics due to features such as smooth

dithering and anti-aliasing, along with transparent and interlaced GIF support. The product's strength as a web graphic design package has been extended in this update with the introduction of a vector format designed specifically for the Web.

Updates in CorelXARA 1.5 include:

- support for full-colour separations
- spot colours and Pantone support
- OLE 2 support
- three new complex fill types (diamond, three point and four point)
- three new graduated transparency types
- Windows 95 and Windows NT 4.0 QuickViewer support for CorelXARA and Corel CMX files
- CMX 5 and 6 import and export for greater inter-operability with other Corel products

New Internet highlights include:

- Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer palettes and browser plug-in support
- animated GIF creation and support for transparent GIF files
- diffused dithered bitmap output for higher quality GIF creation
- embedded JPEG image support that retains compression information

System Requirements

Minimum system requirements include a 486 or higher processor, 8 MB of RAM, Windowsr 3.1, 3.11, Windows NTr (3.51 and 4.0) or Windowsr 95, a CD-ROM drive, VGA card and monitor and a mouse or tablet. A sound board and speakers are optional for online demonstrations.

Corel Corporation Ships New Medical Series Title

Ottawa, Canada - December 12, 1996 - Corel Corporation has begun shipping Breastfeeding, a new title from the Corelr Medical Series. This comprehensive introduction to the physical and sociological aspects of breastfeeding was developed for Windowsr 3.1x and Macintosh, and also runs on Windowsr 95. Shipping as of November 27th, it carries a suggested retail price of $69.00 US.

"This addition to our Medical Series is a complete reference title for health care professionals and parents who want to know more about breastfeeding," said Dr. Michael Cowpland, president and chief executive officer of Corel Corporation. "The detailed medical illustrations, narrated videos and medical dictionary are great complements to the CD-ROM's written material."

Breastfeeding was written by Susan Moxley, a former pediatric and neonatal intensive care nurse, and is based on "Promoting and Supporting Healthy Lifestyles: Breastfeeding," a credit course for health care providers which she teaches at the University of Ottawa. Mrs. Moxley also works as a Public Health Nurse teaching prenatal classes and counseling new mothers by telephone, at breastfeeding support drop-in centers and in the home.

Breastfeeding is designed for health care providers, family physicians, pediatricians, obstetricians, midwives and nurses who work with breastfeeding families. This new addition to the Corelr Medical Series addresses not only the scientific and practical aspects of breastfeeding, but also issues which have an impact on health care providers. In addition, it contains information which will be helpful to breastfeeding families or families who are considering breastfeeding, and covers special situations such as breastfeeding after a premature birth, breast surgery

and the birth of twins.

The information in Breastfeeding is divided into the following sections:

´• History and Evolution: The historical influences that have led to the increase or decrease in popularity of breastfeeding throughout the ages is described. Also addressed are several myths related to breastfeeding.

´• Physical and Scientific Aspects: This section discusses the immunological properties, nutritional constituents and the changing composition of human milk, and describes the breasts’development and physiology during the lactation period.

´• Health Issues: The impact of human milk and breastfeeding on the infant and the mother are described, along with an assessment of the potential dangers of artificial baby milk.

´• Special Situations: This section shows how, by taking the appropriate precautions, breastfeeding is possible in many cases where people might be tempted to think otherwise, such as breastfeeding after breast surgery, premature birth or neonatal jaundice. It also mentions the times when breastfeeding may be discouraged.

´• Breastfeeding management: In this section, readers will find basic recommendations for breast preparation in pregnancy, and ways to prevent, identify and manage the most common problems encountered by breastfeeding mothers and their infants. Readers will also find information on when and how to wean, and how mothers should plan to return to the workforce.

´• Individual perspective: This section discusses the role played by personal experience and the cultural environment in influencing a woman’s decision on how to feed her infant.

´• Societal Perspective: This section focuses on how the demise of breastfeeding in many developed and non-developed countries has turned artificial baby milk and bottles into the "gold standard" against which breastfeeding is measured. It also covers the efforts to raise awareness of the impact of formula feeding on infant morbidity and mortality, and explores the social, political, economic and cultural ramifications of the use of artificial milks.

´• A Database, which contains breastfeeding evaluation charts for feedings, bowel movements and urinary output. Users can print them out and use them in order to monitor their infant’s health and be alert to any changes which might indicate a problem.

Breastfeeding has cut and paste capabilities which allow users to create slide shows, lectures and presentations using Corel PresentationsT. It also comes with a fully narrated glossary and comprehensive index, and Stedman’sr Electronic Medical Dictionary.

System Requirements

Minimum system requirements for Windowsr 3.1x users include a 486DX 66, 8 MB of RAM, a 640x280, 256-color display, a Windowsr-compatible sound card and a double-speed CD-ROM drive. Minimum system requirements for Macintoshr users include a 68030 processor, System 7.1, 8 MB of RAM, a

color or grayscale monitor that can handle 640x480 display and a double-speed CD-ROM drive.

Corel Corporation Ships a New Title from its Medical Series

Ottawa, Canada - December 12, 1996 - Corel Corporation has begun shipping Child Well Being, a new title from the Corelr Medical Series. This fun and informative CD-ROM, which helps all members of the family understand the importance of child care, was developed for Windowsr 3.1x and Macintoshr, and also runs on Windowsr 95. Shipping as of November 27th, it carries a suggested retail price of $69.00 US.

"Child Well Being is an ideal reference tool for schools, child care facilities and families with young children," said Dr. Michael Cowpland, president and chief executive officer of Corel Corporation. "Its animated interactive module makes it appropriate for young children to use as well."

Child Well Being was produced in association with the Canadian Paediatric Society and is based on Li’l Well Beings, a book published by the Society in 1994. Corel Corporation and the Canadian Paediatric Society joined forces earlier this year to produce another title in the Corelr Medical Series, called Child Care, a resource guide for childcare center directors and caregivers.

The information in Child Well Being is divided into two modules: a practical guide aimed at parents and caregivers, and the Children’s Version, an interactive animated module designed for children aged four and older.

The sections in the practical guide include:

´• Health: This section helps parents devise a simple, practical strategy in order to keep their children healthy, and teaches how to identify and interpret the signs of sickness in children.

´• Safety: Parents should refer to this section in order to develop an awareness of the risks to which children are exposed both outside and inside the home. In this section, parents will also learn the basics of injury prevention.

´• Guidance: This section contains answers to common questions about how to nurture babies and children, and includes suggestions for promoting children’s self control, play and creativity.

´• Nutrition: This practical guide for feeding babies and children discusses the role of proper nourishment in children’s health. It also includes information on items such as meal planning, safe food storage and preparation, and bottle feeding.

´• Your Health: This section offers suggestions to parents on how to maintain their emotional and physical health. It helps to prevent burnout and to establish a support structure with reliance on trusted babysitters/caregivers and other resources in the community.

´• Tools: The Tools section contains a number of practical charts and guides that parents can use on a daily basis. They include emergency phone numbers, a safer home checklist, a child development chart and a recommended foods list.

The Children’s Version covers the topics "Health," "Illness," Nutrition,"

"Safety" and "Emotions and Feelings." The information in this section is presented in narrated form, and children have the choice between listening only or listening and displaying the written text as well. This section also contains a coloring book.

Child Well Being features an intuitive graphical interface, a music soundtrack, a topic index and text search and printing capabilities. Parents will be able to check their knowledge with the many random quizzes in the different sections. The children's module contains full animation and narration, an electronic coloring book and animated hotspots and buttons.

The Corel Medical Series
The Corel Medical Series is a line of multimedia CDs that provide comprehensive information to medical professionals, patients and their families, and the public. Using the power of multimedia, the titles combine text, graphics, pictures, videos and three-dimensional objects to provide a detailed review of the subject. Other available titles in the Corelr Medical Series include Epilepsy, Child Care, Breastfeeding and The Amputee. Upcoming titles include Cancer, Aids and the Public, and First Aid & CPR.

System Requirements
Windowsr 3.1x and Windowsr 95 users will need a minimum of an IBMr PC or compatible 486 66Mhz processor, 8 MB of RAM, a double-speed CD-ROM drive, a Windowsr-compatible sound card and a 640x480, 256-color graphics display. Macintoshr users will need a minimum of a 68030 processor, System 7.1, 8 MB of RAM, a double-speed CD-ROM drive and a color or grayscale monitor that can handle a 640x480 display.

Corel Corporation Ships Thumbnail TheaterT: Macbeth

Ottawa, Canada - December 12, 1996 - Corel Corporation has begun shipping Thumbnail TheaterT: Macbeth, a lively and animated rendition of Shakespeare's darkest play. Targeted primarily at students aged 12 and up, this educational CD-ROM was developed for Windowsr 3.1x and Macintoshr, and also runs on Windowsr 95. Shipping as of November 28th, it carries a suggested retail price of $39.95 US.

"Thumbnail TheaterT: Macbeth makes one of Shakespeare's most complex plays incredibly fun and easy to learn," said Dr. Michael Cowpland, president and CEO of Corel Corporation. "With this title, users will develop a better appreciation of this fascinating play and learn about Shakespeare's life and times."

Thumbnail Theater: MacbethT offers three different ways to study Shakespeare's text. Users who have never read or seen the play can access the Watch Me section, which contains a witty and entertaining nine-minute animation summarizing the tragedy's plot.

The Guide Me section will be particularly interesting to those who wish to gain a better understanding of the Elizabethan era and the tragedy of Macbeth. Users will see the animated summary of the play again, but this time they will be able to stop the animation at any time in order to explore different topics related to the story. These topics are accessible by clicking on the different icons that appear throughout the animation.

Those who want to read about different topics but without having to hear the story can go directly to the Self Guide section. This section also contains the entire text of Macbeth.

The topics available in the Self Guide and Guide Me tours are divided into the following sections:

´• The Lives and Times of Shakespeare: This section contains information about Shakespeare and aspects of daily life in the 1500s.

´• Characters in Macbeth: In this section, users will find informative character studies of Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Banquo, MacDuff, Duncan and Malcolm.

´• The Supernatural: Developing the theme of the witches in the play, this section discusses superstition and witchcraft in 16th-century England and the supernatural elements in Macbeth.

´• The Works of Shakespeare: This section contains a complete list of Shakespeare's plays, as well as information on the quartos and folios, the alternation of verse and prose in his plays, and a host of common expressions in modern English coined by Shakespeare.

´• The Theater: In this section, users can learn about the theater as an institution of popular culture in Elizabethan England, contemporary theater troupes and the importance of children in theatrical productions. They will also find examples of how censorship affected Shakespeare's works.

´• Scotland the Brave: This section is invaluable to users who want to learn more about Scottish history. It contains information on the real Macbeth and other historic Scots, mentions the country's best-known castles, and describes the state of weaponry and warfare in Shakespeare's times. It also contains a thumbnail history of Scotland with dates and brief descriptions of pivotal events in the country's history.

´• The Text of Macbeth: Users can read, copy and print the entire text of Macbeth in this section.

´• The Animation: By clicking here, users can watch the nine-minute animated summary of the play.

Thumbnail TheaterT: Macbeth also contains the Timeline, a chronology of historical events from times before Macbeth to the present day, Maps of the world and the British Isles, and a section with on-line help. It allows users to print the current page or copy it to the clipboard, as well as print the entire text of the play.

Development and System Requirements

Thumbnail TheaterT: Macbeth was developed by Michael Mills Productions. Minimum system requirements for Windowsr 3.1x users include a 486 DX66, 8 MB of RAM, a 640x480, 256-color graphics display, 8-bit audio capabilities and a double-speed CD-ROM drive. Minimum system requirements for Macintosh users include a 68030 processor, System 7.1, 8 MB of RAM, a 640x480, 256-color graphics display, standard Macintosh audio and a double-speed CD-ROM drive. This product also runs on Windowsr 95.

Corel Corporation

Incorporated in 1985, Corel Corporation is recognized internationally as an award-winning developer and marketer of productivity applications, graphics and multimedia software. Corel's product line includes CorelDRAWT, Corelr WordPerfectr Suite, Corelr Office Professional, CorelVIDEOT, CorelCADT and over 30 multimedia software titles. Corel's products run on most operating

systems, including: Windows, Macintoshr, UNIX, MS-DOS and OS/2 and are consistently rated among the strongest in the industry. The company ships its products in over 17 languages through a network of more than 160 distributors in 70 countries world-wide. Corel is traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange (symbol: COS) and on NASDAQ-National Market System (symbol:COSFF). For more information visit Corel's home page on the Internet at http://www.corel.com. Corel and WordPerfect are registered trademarks and CorelDRAW, CorelVIDEO and CorelCAD are trademarks of Corel Corporation or Corel Corporation Limited. All products mentioned are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies.

STR Feature

Freeware and Shareware on the Web

By Lloyd E. Pulley, Sr.

Since I browse the web a lot and am on several online networks, Ralph asked me to put together listing of some of the new shareware and freeware software that I run into. My listing will be gathered from the many different sites and areas that I frequent - Tucows, Slaughterhouse, Windows95, ZDnet, AOL, and CIS....just to name a few.

With the 100's (1,000's?) of new files that are released each week, all I can do is scratch the surface of all of the new files that are available each week. All of the files I'll list will be for Windows 95, but that doesn't mean there aren't Windows 3.x and DOS versions available. I'll concentrate on files that I think will interest the average user (I'm a fairly new PC owner and so what I find of interest might be boring to you 'old timers').

There are usually many sites and areas where these files can be d/led from, but I've found the best bet (where the latest versions usually are) is the program's web site - so that's the d/l area that I'll list for each file.

Will this be a weekly column? Maybe, perhaps, I'll try, but no promises. One thing you won't find here is a rating on any of the files. I found out a long time ago, what pleases me might not please you - and vice-versa. This first week, I will concentrate mainly on updates of utility type of programs that I think many of our readers might use or be interested in.

Name/Version	Release Date	Size	Price
RealAudio Player for Windows95 - 3.0 Official release	12/17/96	770k	Freeware

One of the most popular real time audio app's goes 32-bit. RealAudio allows you to listen to audio in real time across the internet with no downloading required. Free for individual use. The RealAudio Player 3.0 brings broadcast quality audio to the Internet. For the first time, the RealAudio Player 3.0 offers stereo sound for 28.8 Kbps modems. In addition, near CD quality sound can be delivered for ISDN and LAN connections.

The RealAudio Player 3.0 beta is available for two Windows formats:

RealAudio Player 3.0 beta for Windows 95 and Windows NT, and RealAudio Player 3.0 beta for Windows 3.1x.

Download Site - http://www.realaudio.com/

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

QuickTime Plug-in - 1.1 Official release
12/17/96 770k Freeware

Allows you to view quicktime movies (.MOV) in your Web Browser. QuickTime is the multi-platform industry-standard multimedia architecture used by software tool vendors and content creators to create and deliver synchronized graphics, sound, video, text and music. QuickTime is not only the best choice for "author once, playback anywhere" multimedia, but the leading choice: an estimated 20,000 sites on the web now offer QuickTime content, and 1,500 leading CD-ROM developers are releasing over 200 new QuickTime enhanced titles every month!

Download Site - http://quicktime.apple.com/

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

Crescendo Plug-in - version 2.3
12/3/96 1192k Freeware

Crescendo is a Web "Streaming" music player for Netscape and Microsoft browsers that lets you listen to MIDI music as you browse a web site. Over one thousand sites already have it...and hundreds more are being added each month. "Streaming" is the ability to listen to music while it is being sent to you over the Internet.

Download Site - http://www.liveupdate.com/crescendo.html

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

Norton Antivirus Definitions Updates for December
12/16/96 6775k Freeware

Monthly updates for your Norton Anti-Virus program.

Download Site - http://www.symantec.com/avcenter/index.html

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

McAfee Viro Scan Monthly Update - November Update 11/29/96
374k Freeware

The November Update for McAfee’s Award-Winning Virus Scanner!

Download Site - http://www.mcafee.com/

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

Ping Thingy 2.0
12/3/96 1700k Freeware

Ping Thingy has just about every feature available. Packet Sizes, Intervals between sends, Timeouts (ttl) and Hops are all configurable. Ping Thingy can now also be started with command line arguments. Output can be saved and or printed for later use. The interface reports everything that's going on and shows all configuration details as well. A lite lookup tool is also included.

Download Site - http://indigo.ie/~zippy/

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

Microsoft Windows 95 Font Smoother - 1.0
12/15/96 100k Freeware

Font smoothing is one of several system enhancements originally included in the Plus! pack for Windows 95. Now you can make full use of the benefits of this technology, making text easier to read and more pleasant to look at, without having to purchase the Plus! Pack Smooth fonts works by adding levels of grays to the corners, curves and diagonals of characters in order to make them appear smoother and less jagged than they would otherwise.

Download Site - http://www.microsoft.com/truetype/grayscal/smoother.htm

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

Power Toys Complete Set - 12/1/96 Release
12/1/96 204k Freeware

Full collection of Microsoft's shell add-ons from the Win95 Shell Development team.

Download Site - http://www.microsoft.com/windows/common/aa2729.htm

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

Kernel Toys Set - 7/4 Release
7/4/9 657k Freeware

More power for your Windows95 system. For the folks who don't like intuitive user interfaces.

Download Site - http://www.microsoft.com/windows/common/aa2730.htm

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

Microsoft Media Manager - Beta
12/15/96 5400k Freeware

A new program that helps you organize and easily locate multimedia files. Using Media Manager is easy-in fact, most of the tasks that you want to do in Media Manager resemble things you already do every day using Windows Explorer. You don’t need to do anything special to your files in order to use Media Manager. Simply move your multimedia files into Media Manager folders, and Media Manager will start cataloging the contents, properties, and annotations in your files.

Download Site - http://www.microsoft.com/mediamanager/

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

Adobe Acrobat Reader - 3.0
12/4/96 3.9mb Freeware

Allows you to view Acrobat (.PDF) files. The free Adobe Acrobat Reader allows you to view, navigate, and print PDF files across all major computing platforms. Acrobat Reader is the free viewing companion to Adobe Acrobat 3.0 and to Acrobat Capture software.

Download Site - http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

EditPad 32-bit 1.2.0
12/16/96 210k

Postcardware

EditPad is a replacement for the standard Windows NotePad. EditPad requires Windows 95 or later to run. No additional DLLs or whatever are required. It has a few very interesting features:

´• EditPad can open as many files at a time as you want.
´• You change between the open files by clicking on their tabs. No hassle with heaps of overlapping windows.
´• If you run EditPad again when their is already an instance running, the file(s) you wish to edit will be opened by the existing
´• EditPad window. This means there will be at most one EditPad window open, which will save you from a lot of task switching.
´• Of course, if you do need more instances, simply pick View|New editor from the menu.
´• Block functions: save parts of your text to disk and insert a file in

the current text
´• Specify many print settings: font, margins, headers/footers, etc.
´• Reopen menu that lists the last 16 files opened.
´• Configure the open and save dialog file filters.
´• MAPI support
´• Easy and working installation and uninstallation.

Download Site - http://www.tornado.be/~johnfg/jgsoft.html

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

AtomTIme95 32-bit - 1.2a
12/16/96 94k Freeware

AtomTime95 is a 32-bit Win95 Internet (Winsock) application which will connect to the Atomic Clock time server in Boulder, CO and fetch the current atomic clock time value. It then compares this value to your PC time and displays the difference. You then have the option of updating your PC clock to match the atomic clock value. There are also advanced settings that allow the application run in a much more automated nature.

Download Site - http://www.winternet.com/~adelsman/Software/

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

Easy Icons 32-bit - 5.1.5
12/17/96 586k

Shareware

Easy Icons was designed as a complete Icon Management System for windows users." For example some of the things you can do are Save any Icon as a separate (.ico) file, Save any icon as a separate (.bmp) file, Create and maintain icon libraries with simple drag and drop operations and much more.

Download Site - http://www.easyapps.com/

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

Windows 95 Drivers for ZIP, Jaz, and Bernoulli - win9552.exe
11/21/96 1.52meg Freeware

Zip Installation Floppy -
flpy52.exe 11/21/96 820k Freeware

Iomega Web Site - Update your Windows 95 Drivers for ZIP, Jaz, and Bernoulli drives. This site carries all of the current releases of the Iomega driver sets for Windows95, Windows3.x, DOS, NT, and the Mac.

Download Site - http://www.iomega.com/
Download Site - America Online

The Iomega support forum on AOL offers two software libraries: PC and Mac.
To access this area use the
AOL Keyword "IOMEGA."

Download Site - MSN (Microsoft Network)
The MicroSoft Network is a new service, and only offers the new Win95 drivers from Iomega.
Use the GO word "IOMEGA" to access this forum.

[Note: I found the latest versions at the web site.]

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

GatherTalk 32-bit - Final beta 5
12/18/96Size 1.14mb Freeware

"GatherTalk is a phone for the Internet. It allows interactive voice conversations around the world. GatherTalk does even more than a phone. It allows teleconferencing on Internet, even with modem connections. It can support 3 people conferencing using 14.4kbps modems and 5 people conferencing using 28.8kbps modems. No special chat servers are required, all connections are direct. This shortens the transmission and processing delays, and also allows the most valuable feature, private conferencing. i.e. You can make your own conferencing groups as you wish. This version started a concept of GatherTalk PlugIn. TextTalk and WhiteBoard are two new Plug-ins for the first distribution.

Download Site - http://www.cixt.cuhk.edu.hk/gtalk/

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

Pegasus E-Mail 32-bit - 2.50
12/18/96 1.39mb Freeware

Pegasus Mail is an electronic mail system for use with Novell NetWare (versions 2.15A and later), and on stand alone systems using the WINSOCK TCP/IP interface. It is a full-fledged mailer, with a lot of nice features like a spell checker, mailing list support, and much more. One of its more unusual characteristics being that it is freeware - not shareware, but "free". You can use it without charge, restriction or obligation on as many servers and machines as you wish.

Download Site - http://www.pegasus.usa.com//

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

WinExit 97 32-bit - 6.0
12/18/96 430k Shareware $15

Win Exit 97 for WIN95 is a utility that provides a quick and easy way to Exit or Reboot Windows, jump to DOS, run programs. Win Exit allows you to place the icon in the Windows 95 System Tray. With 2 mouse click you can run the dialer, format your disk, defrag your disk run notepad, wordpad, cd

player, card file and much more.

Download Site - http://members.aol.com/glliadis/index.htm

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

PKZIP for Windows - 2.50
11/11/96 676k Shareware $49

PKZIP is now available, as a 16-bit and 32-bit version with enhanced features such as: spanning files to multiple diskettes, creating self-extracting files, creating spanned self-extracting files, integration with Windows 95 Explorer and much more.

Download Site - http://www.pkware.com/

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

WinPack32 Deluxe - 1.10 Beta 2
11/26/96 1,000k Shareware $20

WinPack32 Deluxe is the 32-bit version of WinPack. WinPack32 Deluxe supports Zip, Gzip, Arj, Lharc, Tar, Unix Compress (with LZW option) Zoo, UUEncode, XXEncode, Binhex 4.0, Mime, and Base 64. You can create as well as extract from any supported format. Features include, ability to view any file type within an archive, archive conversion, built-in self-extractor, drag-n-drop, recursive subdirectories, multipart archive support, subarchive support, disk spanning, self-extracting disk spans, zip decryption and encryption.

Download Site - http://www.retrospect.com/winpacki.htm

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

WinZip for Windows 95 and NT - 6.2
10/22/96 615k Shareware $29

WinZip brings the convenience of Windows to the use of ZIP files without requiring PKZIP and PKUNZIP. The new WinZip Wizard makes unzipping easier than ever. WinZip features built-in support for popular Internet file formats, including TAR, gzip, Unix compress, UUencode, BinHex, and MIME. ARJ, LZH, and ARC files are supported via external programs. WinZip interfaces to most virus scanners.

Download Site - http://www.winzip.com/

Name/Version
Release Date Size Price

Paint Shop Pro 32-bit - 4.12b3
12/19/96 3200k Shareware $69.00

Paint Shop Pro version 4 is an all new Windows 95 version of the award

winning shareware program that is one of the easiest and most powerful image viewing, editing and converting programs you may ever use. With support for over 30 image formats, and several drawing and painting tools, this may be the only graphics program you will ever need!

Now, Paint Shop Pro version 4 is available for Windows 95 and Windows NT 4.0. The new version has an all new Windows 95 look and many new features and enhancements. The new enhancements and features include dockable tool bars, enhanced selection options, built in special effects filters, RGB color separation, support for new image formats (Progressive JPG, Mac PICT and PNG with transparency), enhanced resampling, enhanced masking options and much more!

Download Site - http://www.jasc.com/

Gaming Hotwire STR Feature

"Video Gaming Central"
on
CompuServe

Game: NFL Gameday 97 Publisher: SCEA Genre: Football System: Playstation Rating: 93% The much awaited sequel to the original Gameday is finally here and it doesn't dissapoint. Gameday 97 is thus far the most realistic and true to life football game on the Playstation. Gameday 97 gives you a full package of options. Included are statistical tracking, full season play, real NFL teams and players, and plenty of other goodies that arm chair quarterbacks should enjoy. The features however are just one of Gameday 97's many strong points.

I was extremely impressed with Gameday 97's control. All moves were extremely easy to execute on both defense and offense. Gameday also seemed to have several more moves on both sides of the ball when compared to Madden. The developers even included moves for defensive players to use when trying to get around the big offensive line. This is something that has never been done in a football game to date and it was a good move by SCEA Sports to do this. Even if your not satisfied with the controls, it is possible to change them under the options menu.

The best part about Gameday 97 is without a doubt the realism. This game by far eclipses Madden in the realism department. The only major flaws that I found were that recievers after taking a hit don't hold on to the ball. For some reason your secondary can't deflect the ball, instead you have to nail the reciever right when he catches the pass to cause an incompletion. There also seems to be a lack of interceptions and turnovers. They happen but not as often as in the NFL. Besides these minor flaws the tackling, running, and passing games are very true to the NFL.

AI wise, the computer is a very worthy opponent. There's no dumb computer defense and the computer offense is able to drive the ball quite effectively if you don't make good defensive selections. Even the easy AI level is difficult if you haven't mastered the advanced special moves on defense and offense. The only real weak point of Gameday is the poor animation and sound. Madden feels so much more natural due to the fluid movement of the players. Gameday feels stiff and choppy and lacks detailed graphics such as the ones found in Madden 97. I did like the option to

customize your own camera angle, but besides that the graphics need to be improved for next year. The sounds are OK but haven't been improved by much over last years Gameday. Overall I'd say that the graphic and sound interface is average, it doesn't hurt the gameplay but it doesn't help it either.

Despite a few minor flaws, Gameday 97 is the football game to get on the Playstation. This is definetly the most realistic, and challenging football game that's come our way.

Game: Kowloon's Gate
Publisher: Sony Music CorporationDeveloper: Sony Music CorporationGenre: AdventureRelease Date: February/March 97 (Japan)

KOWLOON'S GATE

Generally, PlayStation games comprised primarily of computer generated images, with little or no actual gameplay, tend to get looked down on. Pretty pictures are nice, but at the end of the day you want real-time control to go with your nice images. The folks at Sony Music have kept this firmly in mind while working on Kowloon's Gate, and have come up with a hybrid of the two.

In development since before the PlayStation launched, Kowloon's Gate represents one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken for our machine. Reported to come housed on four CDs, and including both CG point-and-click type levels and real-time areas, Kowloon's Gate will be a force to be reckoned with. Based in a cyber-punk Hong Kong, the adventure concerns both mystical Chinese practices, and modern technology. The ancient walled city of Kowloon has reappeared in the middle of Hong Kong, throwing the worlds of Yin and Yang, or light and darkness, out of whack. As a master of feng-shui, an energy source that courses through the earth, you must enter the walled city to help align the Yin and Yang.

Kowloon's Gate will feature a highly stylized graphic presentation, and is worth looking into almost for this reason Described as "Asian Gothic," the game depicts morphing hallways, strange demons, and eerie passageways. If you've ever seen the movie Blade Runner, you'll have some idea of the outer part of the city. But once you're into the dungeons, there's nothing else like it.

Kowloon's Gate is something of an anomaly, and it will be interesting to track the reaction of gamers to its hybrid format. one thing's for certain, though. Graphic adventures may never be the same again.

Game: Mario Kart 64
Publisher: Nintendo Corporation
Developer: Ninetendo Corporation
Genre:Adventure

Mario Kart 64

#1

Review by Ravi Hiranand

Mario Kart 64 does not tamper with the original's formula. Instead, consider it more of an upgrade. The tracks are longer and more detailed,

there are a few new weapons, and (as Scott says) in keeping with this new Miyamoto tradition, there is speech. The game has 16 tracks, and unlike the first one, they aren't just the same theme (Ghost House, Koopa Beach) repeated with a different layout. Almost all the tracks (with the exception of Mario, Luigi and Peach Circuits) are completely different. The designs for the tracks are extremely good and original. Donkey Kong has a cool jungle track by a river (with a steamboat that you jump over), there is a desert with a train whose tracks you must cross, you go inside Koopa's Castle (complete with a Koopa fire trap and Thwomps), and the Ghost House returns (now on top of a lake).

The characters are divided into 3 groups. There are the lightweights (fast acceleration, slow top speed): Peach (Princess), Yoshi and Kinopio (Toad); the heavyweights (slow acceleration, high top speed): Wario, Donkey Kong and Koopa (Bowser); and the Mario Brothers, the average characters. There may be more attributes (damage?), as I have seen Kinopio "nitro" (mushroom) into Koopa and spin out, wheras Mario would knock out the Princess when he uses the mushroom.

The weapons are largely the same, although there have been a few changes. Now there are: Banana (makes people slip), Bunch of Bananas, Green (shoots straight-forward or backwards) or Red (homing) shell, 3 Green or Red shells, Lightning (shrinks opponents for a short time), Blue Spiked Shell (takes out multiple opponents), Mushroom (nitro boost), 3 Mushrooms, Golden Mushroom (unlimited nitro for a short time), Star (invincibility) and fake question block (a trap-opponent thinks they will collect an item, but instead spins out). You can now hold down the shoot button and have your weapon stay behind you, where it may hit a tailgator or block an incoming shell. The multiple shells rotate around you where they will deflect obstacles until you shoot them.

The modes are the same as the original. 1 player can play Time Trial and Grand Prix, 2 players can play Grand Prix, Versus and Battle, and 3 & 4 players can play Battle and Versus. In the original, many thought that the Battle mode was clearly the best, but this one was rather disappointing. The arenas were too big and complex (unlike the simple originals) and many times the arena itself would kill you, rather than an opponent. However, it does boast an interesting feature. Once you die, you become a bomb to take out any opponent (only one balloon). This keeps losers in the game and adds an interesting element-revenge!

The 4-player Versus race is quite simply the most fun I've had since Super Bomberman 2. I'll even say it surpasses it. The new weapons, and the facts that the race is much longer and you get multiple items, adds up to an experience you and 3 friends won't want to miss.

There are a few other missing details. In several places there are video screens that show you racing. The frame rate is at something like 1fps (even in time trial!). Has the power of the N64 run out? Also, in a 4 player mode you can almost powerslide off your little screen, making banana peels unavoidable (how can you see them?). The voices are terrible. Mario and Luigi sound like they have had a dose of helium. Donkey Kong doesn't sound remotely like any sort of animal (and I'm not saying that from a scientific standpoint) and despite the fact that the Princess looks Western, she says "You want me to lace?" (no offense to any Asians). The one massive, terrible fault in this game is the other drivers. No matter how many mushrooms you get, they are always right behind you. And even in 100cc mode, they are much faster than you (although incredibly stupid-are they blind or what? Can they see banana peels?).

Despite the bad, there is a lot of good in this game. Even though the Battle mode wasn't very good, the "revenge" factor certainly made it more interesting. The graphics are great and detailed. The characters were rendered while the tracks are polygons. And the game is very fast-even in a four-player race! The control is pretty much dead-on, and the analog thumbstick is a tremendous improvement over the old d-pad. The game's main feature, and by far the best, is the 4-player Versus race. I don't think that fun can be matched in a long time. An instant classic, one that every N64 should have in its cart slot.

GRAPHICS:
9 (out of 10) + Smooth and fast, quite detailed
SOUND:
7 + Decent music - The voices are rubbish, sound effects aren't too realistic
CONTROL:
9 + The analog stick provides great control - You sometimes spin out fo
r
no apparent reason, jumps are difficult

GAMEPLAY:
9.5 + Each of the courses provide a unique challenge, gameplay simple to

get into but deep to master

LASTABILITY:
10 + What can I say? The new party game. 4-player racing has to be experienced to be appreciated + The 1 player mode is quite challenging

(partly due to insane AI-see above)

OVERALL:
9

If you have any comments about this review, please eMail Ravi Hiranand at

ravih@asiaonline.net

Game: Mario Kart 64
Publisher: Nintendo Corporation
Developer: Ninetendo Corporation
Genre: Adventure

Mario Kart 64
#2
Review by Marc Baime

Well Allright! Mario Kart 64 arrived today with the postman. I have had a pre-order with Joe at Tronix for months and was really excited to see that the game is here. Joe at Tronix, as always, providing excellent service for all video games (see http://www.tronixweb.com). Thanks Joe. The game came in a box approximately 7"x7"x4". On the front is a picture with mario driving his kart towards you. There are various scenes from the game showing 1, 2, and 4 player games, and pictures of the included controller. It says Mario Kart 64 in English and then there's quite a bit of Japanese writing on the box. Opening the box there is a partition. One side contains the included black and grey controller which is very nice looking but, in all respects other than color, is identical to the standard N64 controller. On the other side of the partition is a standard Japanese N64

game box which has pictures on it like those outside the bigger box which contains it. Opening the game box there is the cart for the Kart, some instructions which seem to indicate you shouldn't plug you N64 into the wall if your hands are dripping with water, a nice little reference card which is mostly in indecipherable (for me...and probably you) Japanese, and an instruction booklet. The instruction booklet is all in Japanese but contains a back portion which has some nice diagrams of the 16 immediately accessible tracks and the 4 battle tracks. Someone please provide us with a translation...soon.

On to the game. When you start the game up a golden Nintendo sign comes up spinning faster and faster to the doppler sound of a racing car passing by and then you are placed ina front-end screen with 5 of the characters, a rippling racing flag, and a flashing 'Press Start Button' sign. If you don't press the start button a demo race comes up within about 5 seconds. If you do, you are taken to another menu which allows you to choose 1, 2, 3, or 4 player game, Grand Prix or Time attack mode or to move to separate menus which have Game Options or racing records for the 16 grand prix tracks. While the text in these menus is Japanese, any selections that you make are done in English voice (yeah!) with the exception of the Game Options screen (boo!..someone please translate this...Marty Chinn are you out there?). So now were ready to play. Unfortunately I was alone so I had to play 1 player Grand Prix mode initially. When you enter Grand Prix mode you can choose from 50cc, 100cc, and 150cc go-karts. After you choose the engine type, you select your player. You can choose from Mario, Luigi, Peach, Kinopio (Toad), Yoshi, Donkey Kong, Wario, and Koopa (Bowser). When you choose one they say some short English phrase e.g. Mario says Let's Go'. Then you must choose from one of four groups of courses each containing 4 tracks (total of 16 tracks). While not every one of the tracks provides you with an extraordinary gameplay experience, all of them are good and some are excellent. Gameplay is excellent throughout. The game is like a significantly updated version of the Super Nintendo version. Updated graphics. Updated sounds. Shigeru Miyamoto!!!

The tracks. In the first group of tracks(called the Kinoko Cup), track one is a Daytona type. At the beginning of each track the little guy, who was the camera man in Mario 64, comes out flying on his little cloud to start the race. To accelerate you use the A button. But be careful, if you're tramping hard on that button when the race starts you will find your wheels spinning in place as everyone else passes you by. On the first track there is a cool camera view of you coming down the track as you enter a tunnel. You will immediately notice that the tracks are no longer flat e.g. the first track has sides that go up in turns so it looks a bit Nascar-like. in addition there are cool ambient noises like echoes in the tunnel. Track two is a farm track. This is basically a brown dirt track with some interesting obstacles. In this case, the obstacles are gophers with spiny backs that pop up out of their holes and blow you into the air if you run them over. The third track is a tropical island track. Here you have sand and water you can drive through, little crabs for obstacles, and large bright colored jumps. There is also a shortcut over a jump and through a waterfall. The graphics are exactly what you'd expect from the N64 with very little glitching (although I have seen a little occasionally). The final track in the Kinoko cup is a western track filled with sandy soil, cactus, and a train with train crossings. You can use the train tracks as a shortcut. A lot of fun!

All the power-ups you'd expect from a Mario Kart game are here and more. There are bananas (and you can not only leave them behind but throw them forward) which cause you to twirl around. Bananas come in singles and bunches. There are the beloved red and green shell missiles, which also

come in singles and bunches. There is the star, which makes you invulnerable and everyone else vulnerable i.e. crash into them and they get zapped when you've got the star. There are a number of mushroom speed-up power-ups. There is a lightning bolt which turns the sky dark, causes thunder, and slows all your opponents down. There is a ? mark block which you leave behind and, even though it looks like a power-up block, it blows up whoever tries to pick it up. I'm sure there are more as well. The tracks get more interesting as you progress to the other 3 categories with tremendous jumps, ice and snow, cool lakes with interesting water effects. The game makes great use of reflection and transparency effects. Some of this stuff has to be seen to be believed.

The ambient sounds in the game are really great and enhance gameplay. There are things like echo in taverns, train whistles, tunnel noises, etc. Throughout the game there is all kinds of interesting roadside animation. Everything from rotating roadside signs to a full size Paddlewheel Steamboat on a river. Some of the levels have shortcuts and some have alternate routes. There is an incredible level with a rainbow road riding through a night sky filled with stars and blinking neon signs of all your favorite Nintendo characters that must be seen to be appreciated. Terrain includes dirt, ice, snow, concrete, jungle, etc. This is just a taste.

I had a chance to play two player for just a few minutes and the horizontal split screen seems to be done really well. There seems to be little loss in frame rate though the characters are a little scrunched. I checked out the battle mode but since the only other person available in my home today to play it with me was my 3 year old, I didn't get a chance to really try it. He indicated to me that he didn't think the idea of the game was for me to bump into his character and 'stop it Dad!'. There are 4 battle tracks. One on top if a building (with a cool animation of you falling if you accidentally venture into the open atrium in the center). One a large circular track surrounding a lava pit with some obstacles. A maze like track. And another slippery maze like track. Anyway, it's obvious they will be great fun as soon as I find someone a little older to play against. The time attack mode is nice as well. It allows you to practice any of the 16 menu accessible tracks and will record your time and allow you to race against record times.

Views in the game are nice. The views are third person. You can have a close up or more distant view. And you can change the screen so that it has a track picture in the lower right corner, a speedometer in the lower right corner, or a frame around the track which shows the character order in the race with pictures which move around the outside of the frame (sounds odd but it's cool). I'm sure there is tons of hidden stuff as well but after playing for only four hours I don't know about it yet. GET THIS GAME and you won't be sorry. You may want to wait until the price comes down a bit (probably soon). I paid the most I've ever paid for a game ($155) but don't regret it as it's as good as any other two games plus it comes with the neat black and grey controller. I only wrote about 1/4 of the game here as I don't want to spoil all the cool surprises waiting for you when you play. Enjoy the game. Nintendo 64 has another winner.

Game: PERSONA
Publisher: Sony Music Corporation
Developer: Masque Maker Designs Genre: RPG-Adventure
Release Date: February/March 97 (Japan)

PERSONA

Having had a chance to play a fair bit of Persona, I thought I'd go ahead and post my initial impressions.Honestly, I wasn't expecting all that much out of this game. Most RPGs outside of the Big Three series (Final Fantasy, Lunar, Phantasy Star) haven't been much more than agreeable timewasters -- the two exceptions being Chrono Trigger (another Square game) and Vay (solely for the Working Designs translation). So even though RPGs are one of the few genres I enjoy, I'm choosy. One thing I'll say upfront: this RPG is one for the veterans. It's relatively tough, and the game mechanics are complex and initially daunting. If you're new to RPGs, I'd recommend waiting until the hint book comes out.

I guess I'll go ahead and break this review up into sections:

INTRO: Serves notice that you're in the presence of something different and just maybe a little special. It's a very nice, evocative montage of rendered artwork and photography which sets a melancholy mood and a sense of place, set to some of the most beautiful music I've heard coming out of a game.

Summary: I still watch it occasionally.GRAPHICS: The game looks good, definitely next-generation. Persona uses three different graphic engines, depending on what you're doing. There's a polygonal, overhead perspective used to get from place to place in the city, which is simple but effective. (Though I kind of wish your character didn't look quite so much like a Christmas tree.) In corridors and other 'dungeons' you get a nice Doomish perspective with clean, attractive texture maps. You do not move freely in these corridors but are constrained to a grid, so those who are susceptible to motion sickness should be safe here. Finally, rooms within "dungeons" are portrayed in the traditional tile-based isometric perspective. The detail in these rooms varies from nice to excellent. Your characters are not squash-deformed, which is a refreshing change. (One quibble: navigating the isometric perspective is somewhat less than intuitive.) The character portraits are well-done, though those of you who lust after huge eyes and pink hair may be disappointed. The graphics are all done in a more-or-less realistic, rather than "cartoony" anime, style.

Summary: Not FFVII, but what is? Closer in look to FFVII than to Suikoden or Grandia.

MUSIC/SOUND: The music varies in quality from mediocre all the way to phenomenally good. Though it all sounds like Redbook or PCM, most of it is system-generated (my boyfriend occasionally removes the CD to check -- of course, he does this while *I'm* playing...). It sets the mood very well, but doesn't feel as much of a piece as does the music in Final Fantasy 3. There's no spoken dialogue and very few cut scenes. Sound effects are fine overall, but the sound effects in battle scenes, both for your characters and the monsters, are delightful. (Just wait until you hear Alana call out for her Persona like she's trying to get the attention of a cute boy at school.)
Summary: It rocks. If Suikoden's music is better, Suikoden is a musical god.

STORY/TRANSLATION: The story, at least so far, is one place where the game stands out. I say "so far" because, even at ten hours, I don't think I have more than an inkling of how the story will unfold. It looks like it will be refreshingly free of many of the cliches that burden so many RPGs. The game takes place in the "real" world, in a small town beset by very strange occurences. A group of high-school students have been fooling around with a "game" called Persona, which seems to involve calling up

spirits. Through this they discover the power of Persona, the "ability to call on other selves within you." (It's something of a cross between multiple-personality disorder and demonic possession.) This makes these characters well- suited to addressing the problems at hand, which include demons running amok, corporations building doomsday contraptions, disappearing buildings, alternate realities, and two little girls who might just be intimately related to one of your circle of friends. And I'm pretty sure that's just scratching the surface. Not a game that could be conceived and executed in America. If playing fast and loose with demonology offends you, give this one a pass. (And, although the game's rated K-A, I wouldn't recommend this one for pre- teens.)
The translation is good overall. It doesn't read like the work of native-born Americans, but neither is it Janglish; the occasional less-than-idiomatic phrasing seems to just add to its charm. The personality of the individual characters comes through easily. (The text in battle scenes, when negotiating with the monsters, is less well-translated than the rest of the game, though still not badly done.)

Summary: Excellent so far, though the story may not be for all tastes. Definitely different.

GAMEPLAY/MECHANICS: Battle is turn-based. Combats are random, but (at least so far) not overly frequent. In fact, I think this game has less combat than most RPGs of its sort, but then, the combat it has is usually longer and more involved. I won't go into too much detail on the mechanics of persona and magic, because I want to finish this review and play some more... <grin> It's very different, very cool, and very complex. It has a little bit of the flavor of the Espers of Final Fantasy III, but MUCH more elaborate.

The most outstanding aspect of battle in Persona is -- you can negotiate with monsters! In fact, you need to negotiate in order to get the spell cards you need to make new persona and cast new spells. Different monsters have different personalities. Some are charming, some are tragically pathetic, and some are just plain annoying. Helpful hint, though: although you can avoid all battles with a monster whose spell card you already possess, DON'T. Unless you're trying to get a spell card (or the monster could kick your butt), fight. Otherwise you won't go up enough levels, and you'll find things even more difficult later in the game.

Combat is complex and challenging. Already some monsters can wipe out your party if you're especially unlucky. It reminds me most of Lunar II (Eternal Blue) in this regard. On the plus side, your characters regenerate health and magic just by walking around, and most persona can be used constantly without fear of running out of magic points.

Summary: Different, a lot of fun, but not for beginners.OVERALL: Sony could learn a thing or three about what a good RPG is like by playing this game. The graphics are good, and the music is mostly great, but what makes this game really stand out is its game mechanics, its setting (fantasy is fine, but there's a bit of a glut), and its mood. And, although it's still too early to make a final judgement about the story, it's shaping up to be unusually strong as well.

RECOMMENDED FOR: All veteran RPGers who are not liable to find the subject matter disturbing or offensive.

NOT RECOMMENDED FOR: A first RPG. Players under 13. Anybody likely to find offensive a non- Christian portrayal of demons. (It's a Japanese game

with a Japanese worldview, after all.)

IN CONCLUSION: Excellent so far, well worth a purchase. If the rest of the game maintains the high standard of the first ten hours, the Big Three will have to make room for a new contender.

(Initial shipments of this game were low) -- the local EB only got four copies. Get your copy now!

Kids Computing Corner
Frank Sereno, Editor

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Program Requirements

IBM		Macintosh	
OS:	DOS 3.3	OS:	System 7.0.1
CPU:	286	CPU:	68000
HD Space:	2 MB	HD Space:	1 MB
Memory:	4 MB	Memory:	4 MB
Graphics:	EGA	Graphics:	256 colors, 13" monitor
CD-ROM:	single-speed	CD-ROM:	single-speed

reviewed by Frank Sereno

This 5-disc set is a cornucopia of graphics delights for the desktop publisher. This collection features not only quantity, but quality as well. It contains 60,000 clip art images, five thousand photographs and two thousand fonts that are all neatly categorized in a 1,100 page catalog. You can purchase either a Windows version or a Macintosh version of the Image Pak.

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Special Notice!! STR Infofile File format for Articles

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All articles submitted to STReport for publication must be sent in the following format. Please use the format requested. Any files received that do not conform will not be used. The article must be in an importable word processor format for Word 7.0.. The margins are .05" left and 1.0" Monospaced fonts are not to be used. Please use proportional fonting only and at eleven points.

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- Artwork (pictures, graphs, charts, etc.)should be sent along with the article separately
- Please use a single font only in an article. TTF CG Times 12pt. is preferred. (VERY Strong Hint)

If there are any questions please use either E-Mail or call. On another note. the ASCII version of STReport is fast approaching the "end of the line" As the major Online Services move away from ASCII.. So shall STReport. All in the name of progress and improved readability. The amount of reader mail expressing a preference for our Adobe PDF enhanced issue is running approximately 15 to 1 over the ASCII edition. Besides, STReport will not be caught in the old, worn out "downward compatibility dodge" we must move forward. However, if the ASCII readership remains as high, rest assured. ASCII will stay. Right now, since STReport is offered on a number of closed major corporate networks as "required" Monday Morning reading.. Our ascii readers have nothing to worry themselves about.

Many grateful thanks in advance for your enthusiastic co-operation and input.

Ralph F. Mariano, Editor
STReport International Online Magazine

Gaming & Entertainment Section
with Atari User Support
Editor Dana P. Jacobson

From the Atari Editor's Desk "Saying it like it is!"

Only a few more days until the holiday, and then another week to New Year's - where has this year gone?? Simply amazing! I'm going to keep this week's comments to a minimum; I know people are going to be busy with holiday preparations and all, so you're likely not in the mood to listen to my ramblings this week. <g>

This week we have another edition of Michael Burkley's "Unabashed Atariophile" column - great reading once again. The Boston Computer Society seems to be "re-formed" as a new organization, as you'll see below. A little Atari history snippet and even a Christmas ditty to finish off with a holiday flavor.

Have a great holiday and we'll see you next week after you finally clean up all of the gift wrapping paper and other remnants of the holiday. Party safely and remember those designated drivers!

Until next time...

STR Feature

The Unabashed Atariophile

By: Michael R. Burkley
MRBURKLEY@DELPHI.COM or
Michael-R-Burkley@Worldnet.att.net
or Genie: M.BURKLEY1

It's a busy time of the year! Not only do I still need to buy a number of presents (I generally finish my Christmas present buying the day before Christmas!), but I also need to prepare for all of the worship services that our church is having around and on Christmas. The one event coming up that is going to engage the largest portion of my time is our church's Living Nativity Scene. This is the fortieth year that we've built a stylized stable in the front lawn of our church building, peopled it with shepherds, angels, Mary and Joseph, and occasionally a real baby Jesus.

Along with them we have a cow, a henny (a cross between a male horse and a female donkey), two sheep, and two goats. For two years we had two llamas in our Scene. We justified that by saying they were our stand-in camels. The owner of the llamas offered to lend us some pigs, but we declined, telling him that there probably hadn't been any pigs in that Jewish stable in Bethlehem. The scene lasts for eleven nights from 7-10 p.m., and people stand in the Scene for 1/2 hour at a time. Over the eleven days of the Scene over 350 people will participate, not to mention the far more who drop by for a visit.

I take my turn being a shepherd or Joseph (somehow, no one thinks I'm an appropriate substitute for an angel!), but most of my time is spent down in

"The Bethlehem Inn" in our Fellowship Hall where people come to warm up, eat the goodies, talk, and learn something about our church. Oh, there is one last thing I'm responsible for. The chairperson of the Scene has given me the job of shoveling out the manure from the stable. He says that I do a lot of that every week, so he's confident that I'll do a good job. Now I wonder just what he means by that...? <g>

I am very glad to be writing my column again, this time in STR. I need to write this column, otherwise I will just go on collecting software (which is fun) and never getting around to writing the descriptions for them (which is -work-). I also do like the complements I get for writing it! My special thanks go out to Dana J. and Joe M. for their wonderful words of two issues ago. I showed them to my family, and my wife (the wonderful Suzy B) said, "That's nice," and my son said, "Gee!" and glowed as he looked at me. You can imagine how that made me feel!

Thanks also to those of you who wrote me with suggestions for getting my clone and GEMulator up and running in a reasonable fashion. Well, all that I can say is that it has its good days, and it has its bad days. Today was one of its bad days! It isn't Atari hatred though. It crashes just as nicely just running Windows 95!

But enough of all the ramblings! Let's get on to all the software!

I've been concentrating on downloads from the Internet lately. There is so much material available! I've been finding out that the proverbial helpfulness of Atari users and developers is still an ongoing thing. Many of the programs I've downloaded are in German, but so far when I've contacted the authors through e-mail, almost all of them have told me about their programs, and have offered some help in providing English helps. That's great!

Unfortunately, I don't have the time, space, or ability to tell you how to get online and surfing the Internet on your Atari. I can tell you about the software you may use (see below), and where to find it, but not how to get it, or how to set it up. You're on your own there, but there is help (I'll tell you about that, too).

There is an astounding amount of information on the Internet. Some of my favorite sites that I have discovered are at:

The University of Kaiserslautern (UNI-KL.DE./PUB/ATARI);
Hensa (MICROS.HENSA.AC.UK/PLATFORMS/ATARI);
Leo (FTP://LEO.ORG/PUB/COMP/PLATFORMS/ATARI);
The STiK homepage (WWW://FLINNY.DEMON.CO.UK), and
The STOSSER Software home page NEON.AIRTIME.CO.UK).

There are scores more available! Along with the online services such as Delphi, Compuserve, and Genie, I recommend them all to you!

Finally, on to the software. The Internet software was all taken from the STiK site, though it may also all be found on Delphi (and most likely Compuserve and Genie, though I'm not sure about that).

WWWI_100 is the WWW-Installer v.1.00 by Manfred Ssykor (dated Sept. 12, 1996). Using this install program, and the installation files included with the below internet software files (such as STiK, ATARIRC, FINGR122, etc. you will be able to install a complete Internet access package on your Atari ST-Falcon. The docs are very detailed, and it looks as if it isn't all that hard to do. Just put the compressed program files in the ARCHIVE

folder and the program takes care of the rest! I do recommend that you try to read the directions! The program allows you to use English, French, German, Swedish, Spanish, or Italian in your setting up. Directions on setting up batch files for use in the installation are included. The below mentioned files all have standard batch files included for you to modify for your particular system.

STIK1_12 is STiK, the freeware TCP/IP Network Layer v.1.12 by Dan Ackerman dated Nov. 18, 1996 (based on the original version by Steve Adam). STiK implements TCP/IP on the Atari ST/TT/Falcon series of computers. This software will allow you to connect to the Internet. STiK is in 2 parts, STIKTSR.PRG creates and manages the STiK Cookie and STiK.ACC handles the USER/Protocol interaction. Currently, STik only supports SLIP and CSLIP for Internet connection. A PPP implementations is being worked on. STiK will run on ALL ST/TT/Falcon computers, even those with only 512K of RAM (though you can't run CAB, which I recommend, with less than 1 meg of RAM). This file comes with detailed docs, and it doesn't look that hard to configure, though I admit I haven't done so yet. This version is mostly a fix for the JPEG/binary file transfer bug of v.1.11. This archive contains an INSTALL.BAT file for use with WWWI_100.

CAB15 is the Crystal Atari Browser v.1.5 by Alexander Clauss (October, 1996). CAB is a wonderful addition to the Atari world. With it you may browse HyperText Markup Language (HTML) documents, the standard type document for display on the Internet World Wide Web (WWW). All by itself CAB can only be used to display HTML documents offline, but when you add CAB.OVL to CAB itself you can look through online WWW pages CAB cn be used to browse HTML documents. CAB now conforms to all HTML2 specification and offers most draft HTML3 specification and NetScape features. The program comes with English, German, Swedish, Spanish, and Italian resource files and German and English documentation. There is ST-Guide format hypertext help (you need ST-Guide to use it). Believe me, it's great to be able to double-click on an HTML document and have it appear in all it's glory onscreen! You may configure CAB to use external picture viewers (such as GEMview), and texteditors, or just let CAB do it all by itself. Usable in all resolutions, but ST High or above is better. TOS 1.0-4.04, Geneva, MultiTOS, Magic compatible. GET THIS! Freeware, but please register and send the author a contribution. He's worked HARD on this. This archive contains an INSTALL.BAT file for use with WWWI_100.

CAB_030 is a version of the main program of CAB v.1.5 which has been compiled for 68020/30 processors (Falcon, TT, Macintosh (MagicMac), 68030 upgrade cards). It is faster than the 'normal' version. This archive contains *only* the main program. You still need the 'normal' CAB release (CAB15).

COVL_121 is the Overlay file for CAB v.1.21 (CAB.OVL) by Dan Ackerman (dated Dec. 10, 1996). CAB.OVL lets you browse the Web and on-line HTML documents by interfacing with STiK (STIK1_12). Place in the same directory as CAB.APP (from CAB15) and enjoy the benefits of the Internet! This archive contains an INSTALL.BAT file for use with WWWI_100 (but only the version on Delphi, because that's what I uploaded there).

CACHE_ED is CACHE.CAB-Tool v.0.40 by Manfred Ssykor (dated August 9, 1996). This program (when run through ABC will allow you to edit your Cab Cache folders contents. Free up lots of space and clear out lots of old URLs (site addresses) with a discriminating hand! English and Swedish docs and ST-Guide Hypertext files included. This archive contains an INSTALL.BAT file for use with WWWI_100 (by this same author).

FINGR122 is Finger v. 1.22 by Lonny PUrsll (dated June 2, 1996 -- that's my 17th wedding anniversary!). Finger is a client program designed to work with the STiK internet software (see STiK1_12). It allows you to check e-mail addresses, get more detailed information on an account, check your own account for waiting e-mail, search for other users, and more. Finger works with TOS 1.0-4.04, Geneva, Magic, Multi-TOS, etc. with ST medium or greater and some free disk space on your system to store some downloaded files. Detailed docs included.

FORECAST is Forecast v.0.3 by Jim Baumgardner and Dan Ackerman (dated 1995). Forecast is a tool for getting the current weather conditions for almost any major city in North America via the Internet. You must have STiK (see STIK1_12 or higher) installed, enabled and connected to use Forecast. If you know the airport code for the airport nearest the city for which you want the weather report. I don't know what you do if you don't know the code! But when the code is entered you will get the temperature (in degrees fahrenheit), barometer, wind speed and humidity. This information is both displayed graphically and in text (at the bottom of the window). Forecast should work in any planar video mode (2,4,16,256 colors) It does not work in 16bit color mode. (High Color Mode on the F030) A resolution higher that ST Low is also recommended, but not required. Docs included. This archive contains an INSTALL.BAT file for use with WWWI_100.

HSMODA07 is HSMODEM V.7.0 by Harun Scheutzow (Dated Aug. 6, 1996). This package of utilities (several different utilities are included for your specific machine) that is a serial fix/serial port accelerator for all ST(e)/Mega ST(e)/TT/Falcon machines/MultiTOS/MagiC/MagiCMac/Geneva. Put this program in your AUTO folder and you will find that you no longer have a problem your serial-port speed limitations on Modem Port 1. The author claims a reliable speed increase to 38 kbps on an 8-mHz ST and much more on a Mega STe and TT. ZOOM!

JPEG_OVL (dated Oct. 18, 1996) is a all Atari comatible computer overlay module for CAB (see CAB15 or higher) which also supports the DSP (the DSP is only for Falcon users though) for load and decompressing JPEG images. Falcon users benefit from Brainstorm's JPEGD AUTO folder program which is up to 15 times faster then the regular method. This archive includes an AUTO folder program (JPEGD.PRG) which is the DSP-Decoder, an accessory (JPEG.ACC) which is a demo for use with JPEGD which shows up to 16 color gray, from 256 colorized), and the CAB_JPEG.OVL file itself, which is the CAB Overlay module using JPEGD. CAB_JPEG.OVL is shareware by Dieter Fiebelkorn (the GEMView author). Limited docs included. But, since the author doesn't include his address (get it from GEMView) or any shareware registration fee, I would guess it's up to you how to register it.

MGFTP103 is MG-FTP v.1.3 by Michael Guse (dated March 6, 1996). This program will allow you to use the File Transfer Protocol (FTP) to get files off of the Internet. It requires STiK (see STiK1_12 or higher). The usage is pretty simple, and the docs tell you how to use this program. Mouse controlled. German and English docs, resource files, and source code (.H) included.

NEWSIE66 is NEWSie v.0.64 by John Rojewski (dated Dec. 5, 1996). NEWSie uses the NNTP Internet protocol to read UseNet News articles. It provides a standard GEM interface complete with menu, windows, and mouse selection. As with most of the Internet packages for the Atari, NEWSie uses STiK as the Internet access manager via a SLIP connection (though STiK is not required when using NEWSie offline). This version provides you with the ability to read, save, and print NEWS articles, and full Posting and Reply

capabilities. Articles can be downloaded and read offline. Offline Posting and Followup functions are now available. Newsie supports a full complement of e-mail services, including Send, Reply, and Forwarding of mail messages. Multiple mailboxes are supported, with transfer of mail between mailboxes. Includes the "Almost Foolproof UUdecode" v.3.7 dated 1987 used to decode UUencoded Binary files. English Program and Docs.

TELNET is Telnet v.1.01 by James E. Baumgardner II (and I think Dan Ackerman from a note mentioning "Dan" in the archive). Detailed docs are included, but, as always, it helps if you are familiar with the concepts involved. Telnet is a GEM program based on a program of the same name originally developed by the Regents of the University of California at Berkley as a program used to get their clients and servers talking to one another in a platform-independent virtual terminal. How is Telnet useful to you? Well, if you have some sort of login account somewhere on this vast planet of ours, you can login to it. Also, some libraries and other servics have areas that are accessible only after a login (through Telnet). Use this program to get at them! This archive contains an INSTALL.BAT file for use with WWWI_100.

Wow! The Internet software is getting here fast! Check it out!

I also recommend that you check out the STOSSER Software site in England. There is piles of software there: Games, Children’s Educational, Programming, Disk Magazines, and more. Here are reviews of just two of the games I downloaded.

HEARTLND is Heartland by Tony Greenwood and Dean Chadwick of STOSSER Software (dated Sept. 28, 1996). HEARTLAND is a fast, multi-directional (8 ways!) scrolling (with a HUGE play area) platform game programmed in STOS. The basic (pun intended) story behind it is that while you and a friend are playing a game of cards you notice that all of the hearts are missing. Now you can’t play the game with those cards gone, so, guess what? You go out to find them. Bad move for your longevity, but you can be revived, and this game is worth it! You have to search the play area looking for a whole set of hearts, the Ace, King, Queen and Jack are scattered around in plain sight, but all of the other cards are hidden behind doors. Once you go through that door to collect the card you are teleported to another area of Heartland, forever unable to return to where you just were (that means you have to collect all the energy, coins, potions, etc. you can before you go through a door...you’ll need them. The key to this game is to remember where everything is--the online map helps in this. It’s not as easy as it sounds, but it sure is fun! You may save your games, too, which is a very nice when a game is as long an involved as Heartland. Excellent music when run with an STE, earlier machines will have sound but no music. Heartland will run in ST Low on all ST/STE computers with at least one meg of RAM (I don’t know about the Falcon and TT--try Backward and STOS FIX if you have one of those machines). You can even run it from your hard drive! Joystick contrlled. Docs included. Commentware, in that you must send them your comments about the game.

DIAMOND is Diamond-Ice by Tony Greenway (Programmer) and Dean Chadwick (Graphic Artist) of STOSSER Software (dated Dec. 1996). Diamond is the sequel to the popular game Heartland. While the heros of that game were out saving all of the heart cards, someone stole all of the diamonds! But instead of hiding them all over the place, they have encased them in a block of DIAMOND-ICE. Your mission should you choose to accept it is to find the cards (this is quite simple) and then find some way of melting the Diamond Ice (Not so simple). This game again boasts, like Heartland, a very large play area, eight directional movement, and more. Not only is it

an arcade style platform game, it also incorporates a challenging puzzle element. There are lots of colorful animations and background. In order to succeed you must find and use certain objects, meet and interact with charactors such as Eric and Ernie or Phil and Grant the Devious Bruvvers. To play this game well you certainly have to keep busy! Diamond will work on all Atari ST computers with no "fixes" required. It will work on a Falcon if you use Backwards and ST Low rez at 8 MHz. Sorry you TT users. This game is not TT compatible (even using STOS Fix? I don't know). You get enhanced sound with the STE and Falcon. You can even run it from your hard drive! Docs included. Joystick controlled.

Well, that's all for now. I'm late in getting this to Dana as is (come to think of it, I usually am late! Oh well!).

I wish you all a blessed Christmas. May you remember whose Birthday it really is!

--Michael

Michael is the Pastor of The Niagara Presbyterian Church in Niagara Falls, NY, the co-owner of Suzy B's Software, and a former Polyurethane Research Chemist (He gets almost as enthused about Chemistry as he does about Atari Computers, but they both come in second place to someone else--you guess!).

The Boston Computer Foundation, Inc.
Established a New Non-Profit Organization
Dedicated to Promoting Computer Literacy

BOSTON, Dec. 16 /PRNewswire/ -- The creation of The Boston Computer Foundation, Inc. (BCF) was announced today by the group's new Executive Director, Gretchen Hardey. The Boston Computer Foundation, Inc. has been established by a generous personal donation from Arthur Nelson of The Nelson Companies as a not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting computer literacy to individuals and groups not reached by the commercial market. Nelson is the former Chairman of The Boston Computer Society.

"Since the BCS closed its doors in September, many computer user groups have decided to continue independently. I felt strongly that the public service initiatives started by the BCS were vital and that if discontinued would leave a large void in the community.", Nelson said. Foundation board members and consultants met with public and private sector business resources for advice in building successful partnership programs.

The mission of the BCF is to identify clients with limited access to technology, and to seek corporate partnerships in order to provide a wide range of computer training in schools, libraries and other community settings. The first major project of the Foundation will be to implement a city-wide computer training program, funded by Microsoft Corporation (Nasdaq: MSFT), which will help bring computer technology to select under-served communities throughout Boston. The Boston Computer Foundation is founded on the idea that computer education should be accessible to everyone. "New England has an abundance of technology firms and educated people. The goal of the Foundation will be to educate and inspire people of all ages and backgrounds about technology," said Gretchen Hardey, Executive Director of the BCF. "The BCF will help people to take control

of the Information Age, develop new skills, explore the world and express themselves with technology. People interested in supprting the Foundation should contact the BCF office, 617-737-6111 or email at bcf@ziplink.net.

CONTACT: Boston Computer Foundation, 617-737-6111 or bcf@ziplink.net

Newsbytes NewsReel - 12 Years Ago This Week

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, U.S.A., 1996 DEC 18 (Newsbytes) -- By Nick Gorski. Please note that this week's stories are from the week of December 25, 1984. Twelve years ago these Newsbytes stories were filed: Fame And "Fortune," Atari Retrenches; A Kaypro Christmas; and Robot Power. These stories were taken from the extensive archives at the Newsbytes Website at http://www.newsbytes.com.

Fame And "Fortune"

For the third time, IBM was Fortune magazine's "Most Admired Corporation," based on a poll of 8,000 executives. Hewlett-Packard ranked fifth and was the only other computer firm on the list of either the most or least-admired company. IBM won kudos for management, investment, financial soundness, and use of assets. However, the magazine reports "innovation" was not exactly supreme on the tally for IBM.

Atari Retrenches

It won't be a very nice holiday for residents of Limerick, Ireland -- 250 members of that community were told last week that Atari's plant in Limerick will close on Christmas Eve. Also, "between 30 and 40" workers were laid off from Atari's Sunnyvale, California headquarters. Jack Tramiel told the "San Jose Mercury News" that he's hoping to build a new, automated plant in Europe, and in the meantime, all production has been shifted to Taiwan. Irish officials, meanwhile, are aghast at the closure. Frank Prendergast, Mayor of Limerick, has been quoted as saying, "Irish workers are suffering so Atari could benefit from slave labor wages in the Far East!"

A Kaypro Christmas

Kaypro has gotten into the Christmas spirit by donating 400 computers to 35 third-world countries. The "International Grants Program" has been in progress for a year now. Thai tribesmen are using Kaypros to keep track of their handicraft sales, remote Mexican people are using Kaypros to catalog their medicinal plnts, and Indonesian Kaypro recipients use Kaypros to pioneer linguistic analysis of unwritten languages. Now that's progress!

Robot Power

A report in Reuters says that a Japanese company has created a "super robot" which can demolish a supertanker in 120 hours flat. Nippon Sempaku Kaihatsu says its torch-wielding robots go through a tanker at a rate of 47 inches a minute -- "four times faster than a man." Anime and Manga fans probably won't find these at the local toy discounter.

Entertainment Section

PlayStation, $1 Billion Sales!
AlpsPad! Santa Says...

And More!

From the Editor’s Controller - Playin’ it like it is!

Well, it appears that the gaming console fans will have a terrific holiday this year, unless you’re one of the few unfortunate ones who still cannot seem to find an N64. The PlayStation is selling extremely well and supplies have been restocked so customers shouldn’t have a problem finding one, or plentiful games. Even we Jaguar owners will have the opportunity to have a "good" holiday with the availability of Breakout 2000 and Towers II.

Speaking of these two games, supposedly both are on their way to us for review. JV Enterprises sent me a complimentary copy of Towers II and I hope to take a good look at it over the weekend, if I’m not mall-bound doing last-minute shopping!

Have a great holiday and I hope that the games/systems that you’ve been looking for somehow manage to find their way to you.

Until next time...

Industry News STR Game Console NewsFile - The Latest Gaming News!

Sales Of PlayStation Hardware And Software Exceed One Billion Dollars

Revenue for Sony Computer Entertainment America Has Soared Since the System’s Introduction Just Fifteen Months Ago

FOSTER CITY, Calif., Dec. 17, 1996 -- Sony Computer Entertainment America, marketers of the PlayStation(tm) game console and leading software developers for the platform, announced today that North American hardware and software revenues for the PlayStation brand have, through December 1, exceeded $1 billion, with significant additional revenues expected during the holiday season.

"Revenues have far exceeded our initial expectations and are a testament to the PlayStation’s dominance in the next-generation videogame industry," said Kaz Hirai, chief operating officer, Sony Computer Entertainment America. "We entered this market one year ago and now we are the undisputed worldwide leader." With more than two million PlayStation game consoles units already sold in North America, and one million more expected to be sold by the end of the year, the PlayStation game console has achieved a critical mass far faster than expected.

"We’re understandably delighted with our tremendous success," said Hirai. "In essence, the PlayStation’s success reflects consumer confidence in our technology, the strength and quantity of our games, and the importance of the Sony brand name."

SingleTrac Entertainment Launches Independent Model

SALT LAKE CITY (Dec. 16) BUSINESS WIRE -Dec. 16, 1996-- Developer of

Award-Winning Twisted Metal(TM), WarHawk(TM) and Jet Moto(TM). Titles Poised to Deliver Quality Interactive Content for Next Generation Platforms in a move to address the changing dynamics of the next generation entertainment software marketplace, SingleTrac Entertainment today announced that it is launching an independent publisher business model.

SingleTrac -- developer of the award-winning PlayStation(TM) titles Twisted Metal(TM), Twisted Metal 2(TM), WarHawk(TM) and Jet Moto(TM) -- has become recognized for its arcade-quality real-time 3D ction and uniquely entertaining genres that consistently elevate gameplay standards. Market research points to the PlayStation console and the multimedia PC as two of the fastest growing next generation gaming platforms. In addition, Internet-based multi-player game sites represent an exponentially expanding market. SingleTrac’s new publishing strategy enables the company to aggressively pursue these and other commercially viable platforms, and to own and exploit its intellectual property franchises.

"In a world where ’bigger’ is often misperceived as ’better,’ we believe there is a tremendous opportunity for an independent publisher with the right formula," said Mike Ryder, president and CEO of SingleTrac. "Our business plan is simple: create, own and exploit superior-quality interactive entertainment content on key viable platforms; leverage strategic partnerships; and build an experienced professional management team."

SingleTrac is supporting this move by building an internal and external infrastructure ensuring leading development, marketing, sales, and distribution capabilities. This initiative includes substantially enhanced product development efforts as well as a marketing and sales organization that leverages direct sales, an independent product representative network and third-party distributor relationships. As importantly, SingleTrac is committed to building world-class strategic partnerships.

Already, SingleTrac has been chosen by Microsoft for an exclusive equity investment and a product marketing and distribution agreement, giving SingleTrac worldwide PC reach as well as support for multi-player online game development. SingleTrac continues its relationship with Sony Computer Entertainment as an investor and customer and has secured a PlayStation publishing license.

"SingleTrac’s leadership in combining real-time, 3D graphics with great gameplay fits with Microsoft’s vision of interactive entertainment for the multimedia PC," said Ed Fries, general manager of the games group at Microsoft. "In a short period of time, SingleTrac has not only proved to be a dynamic new player, but they have also demonstrated their ability to exploit emerging technologies and remain on schedule, making this an attractive collaboration."

In a separate yet related announcement today, SingleTrac has added two industry veterans to its management team. The company, which is moving into expanded facilities in December, is also building an innovative usability lab to enhance its products through ongoing, live user testing. SingleTrac’s new product development efforts will be focused on delivering great gameplay through a combination of cinematic-style entertainment value and superior execution. The company’s renowned development team will continue to push the boundaries of real-time 3D, movie-quality sound tracks, immersive environments, character development and unique genres.

In addition, a unique platform-specific system design approach will ensure that its multi-platform titles are built from the ground up to maximize the power and strength of each individual game engine. The company is creating a strong line-up of SingleTrac branded games that will be released for the PlayStation, PC (Windows(R) 95) and the Internet, with the first title scheduled for the Holiday ’97 season.

"Grade ’A’ titles and marketing execution are what’s required in today’s market in order to gain shelf space -- anything less is unacceptable to today’s demanding gamers and retailers," said Todd Kelly, executive vice president of SingleTrac. "Our ’quality over quantity’ and ’no ports allowed’ approach, combined with our strategic relationships, ensures that we will meet these requirements for success."

Founded in 1994, SingleTrac is a leading independent interactive entertainment publisher for next generation consumers who demand a superior quality gameplay experience that exploits the power of emerging platforms. SingleTrac’s first products, published by Sony Computer Entertainment America -- the award-winning Twisted Metal, Twisted Metal 2, WarHawk and Jet Moto -- are among the most critially acclaimed titles for the PlayStation.

A focus on quality content development, coupled with strategic partnerships with Microsoft and Sony, enable the company to take interactive entertainment publishing to a new level. SingleTrac sells its products for the PlayStation, multimedia PC (Windows 95) and the Internet through domestic and international consumer software and electronic toy retail markets. Headquartered in Salt Lake City, SingleTrac can be contacted at 801/521-5644 or through its Web site at http://www.singletrac.com.

Entertainment Online STR InfoFile - Online Users Growl & Purr!

I recently received a note from JV Enterprises’ Jag Jaeger regarding Towers II. I thought that I’d pass it along as it had some interesting advice, and the promise for an extended version of the storyline (which was cut from the manual as a cost-savings factor). Even a tip or two to round it out.

From Jag Jaeger:

Just wanted to tell you that your copy of Towers II has been sent. You should be getting it Monday. I also wanted to give you some extended information because I know you’re a pro at these type of games :)

Towers II was developed with the beginner in mind. With that meaning, things on the first couple of levels can be kinda slow. They were designed that way so people can get used to the controls and the style of play. About the fourth to fifth level things start to pick up and quickly. This also isn’t your normal RPG were you just go around hackn’ & slashn’ to raise your character up in levels. The story line is very intricate and subtle. If you pay close attention to the scrolls you read, the story, (like a good book), will fall into place. One final warning, THIS ISN’T DOOM, if you blaz around with blood in your eyes and kill everything in site, you will not be able to finish the game. Eye for an Eye is a good rule of thumb.

PS. Not to burn any bridges with Telegames, In the manual they removed a lot of the story to save on printing costs. In a week or so, I will be posting the complete story on our website. It’s nothing imperative to the

game, it just adds to the story line. I will let you know when I have posted it.

PSS. Above all, enjoy the game, have loads of fun, and thank you for all your support.

Sincerely,
Jag Jaeger
JV Games
Jag <jvent@vegas.infi.net>
http://jvent.pho.com

We had a few inquiries about the Alps Interactive limited-offer gamepad that we reported on last week. So, Sony's Don Thomas sent along the following:

From http://www.interactive.alps.com

Special "Limited Edition" Gamepad from Alps Interactive in metallic red.
Available only at Electronics Boutique or from Alps Interactive.

Only 5,000 gamepads were made!
Each one comes with a numbered certificate of authenticity.

Available Friday, December 13
Cost is approximately $39.95 at EB
or $44.95 SRP direct from Alps Interactive

If you don't order before we sell out, you could win one in January by visiting the following websites where we will be hosting online promotions:

Next Generation
Ultra-Game Players
VGOL - Video Games Online

Alps Interactive:
Call Alps Interactive direct at 800-720-2577 (ALPS)
  a. Suggested Retail Price is $44.95
  b. Domestic shipping/handling charge $4.95 USD
  c. International shipping/handling charge $21.00 USD.
     Please fax international orders to 408-432-0206 or
     email sales@interactive.alps.com
  d. If you can not reach us at the above 800 number, please call
     Dorisene Bursey at 408-432-6446. 2.Order by using the internet
     (Purchase Order)

Retailers:
  1.Electronics Boutique
  2.Incredible Universe
  3.Kaybee Toys

Distributors:
  1.Mecca Distributors (http://www.mecca1.com)

Santa: You Don't Have To Buy Nintendo

ACROSS AMERICA, Dec. 16 (UPI) -- A survey of department store Santas across America found Monday that children are still asking for bicycles and train sets, not just for the toys that are advertized most heavily on

television. The Santa Survey, released Monday, was conducted by the National Retail Federation, which represents 1.4 million U.S. retail outlets, and Santa Plus, a company that supplies Santas to shopping malls. The Santas were polled about what kids are asking for. Such ballyhooed gifts as Nintendo and Tickle Me Elmo did figure into the children's requests. But so did such older favorites as Power Rangers and Barbie and even more venerable presents like trains and bikes.

Other heavily requested items including Cool Tools, Baby Bye-Bye, Power Wheel, Sega, and computers. Bob Riggs, owner of Santa Plus, puts it this way, "Santa says you can't go wrong with traditional gifts like bicycles and train sets."

PEOPLE... ARE TALKING

On CompuServe

Compiled by Joe Mirando
CIS ID: 73637,2262

Hidi ho-ho-ho friends and neighbors. Yes, just a few more days to Christmas. Even if you don't observe the holiday, take a moment to be thankful for what you have. It is far too easy today to take for granted all the things we've come to see and use, and to forget what it is to have to do without them. For me, key among these necessities has always been friends. Because I tend to choose close friends carefully, they are what I'm most thankful for. It really is true that you are known by the company you keep and I'd rather have a few good friends than professional success. What has this got to do with Atari computers? Nothing whatsoever. I just thought it was worth thinking about. Let's take a look at what what's going on with the Atari folks on CompuServe.

From the Atari Computing Forums

Mark Showalter asks:
"Can someone tell me what mag's are still available for the Atari? I have a 1040ste & would love to get some more info. I uswed to get St mag, but unfortunatly all the copies & discks went into the divorce black hole in another state far, far away."

Our own Classics & Entertainment Editor, Dana Jacobson, tells Mark:
"Domestically, there's ST Informer and Current Notes available."

Joe Lensbower tells Dana:
"I don't know about St Informer... I sent in for a year's subscription almost a year ago, the first - and last- issue I got was dated August..."

Dana replies:
"I just sent in my renewal recently also. I have word from Rod MacDonald that ST I is still ongoing, but has changed to a quarterly publishing schedule. I trust Rod."

Ian Taylor tells Dana:
"You can still get ST Applications from the FAST club here in the UK"

Dana replies:

"Thanks for the additional info, Ian. I hate to admit it, but I've lost track of all the recent changes in the UK mags these days - I can't remember which ones are still around! <g> Have you seen Atari Computing yet? I'd like to get my hands on one of those to check out."

Simon Churchill tells Dana:
"I have now recived the first two issues of atari computing and must say it's the best there is. It is the same quality as Atari Review, just in black and white. Yes, there's no fancy colour, but, do you need colour?? No!! The articles are well laid out with pictures, the lot. A reader's disk is available with each issue and on issue two came a special Atari Computing version of 'THING' The shareware alternative desktop, which I have got quite fond of, still more playing. But with this and the easy chance to obtain multi tasking O/S and AES modules makes for a complete mutli tasking system. It's worth the hunt for it.

PS, the first print run was done for 60,000 copies. They were so over welmed with order's that they did a special reprint of the first issue!! Issue two had a trebled print run. And some say the ST is dead? Is this dead?"

Guy Rausch asks:
"Does anyone know if there exists an ATARI ST->MACINTOSH Emulator and where to get it? I was told such an emulator had been presented on German TV (3SAT) some days ago."

Peter Richards tells Guy:
"There was the one from gadgets by small ages ago. From memory there was ...
Aladin - Magic Sac - Spectre 128"

Carl Barron tells Peter:
"All known to me, your list, of mac emulators for the atari, will not work with system 7.x software. [Most of it now a days] If you have old mac software looking for a used emulator is possible. A more modern approach is a mac emulating atari software:) This approach is also more expensive. If you only have system 7 software and you want both os'es on one machine it is the only alternative."

Albert Dayes adds:
"Gadgets by Small had one called Spectre-GCR. You should probably be able to find one that is used since it is no longer being made."

George Iken tells Guy:
"Spectre GCR (by Gadgets by Small) is an older emulator that will run as a Mac Plus. Obviously it doesn't do any 68020 or above mac stuff, so no Quadra emulation or anything like that. Lots of used carts (it plugs into the cartridge port and the Floppy port .. both ports are used by the Spectre) are available from users (Gadgets by Small is out of business). I myself have two of them laying around somewhere. Prices range are probably in the $50 on up range now (most I've seen are $75 on up). Note, this works on an ST, and MegaSt for sure as well as on STe's. I have used mine on a TT as well. Doesn't work on a Falcon though (no Floppy port for one thing)."

After I post a question about getting a larger hard drive, several people tell me that almost any SCSI HD will do. Notice that they said "almost"? That turned out to be the thorn in my side. I ended up ordering a reputable brand name from a reputable company. Unfortunately, the drive just won't work with my MegaSTE. Or with my Stacy. Or with my old backup

1040STF. It turns out that the drive I ordered uses arbitration, which Atari-compatible host adaptors don't like. So the drive is going back and will be replaced with another one.

In the meantime, Dana Jacobson tells me:
"Hey, good luck with the new drive! Keep me posted as I'm also in the market for a new/larger drive for the BBS - people like Myles are looking forward to a larger assortment of files (which are now sitting on my other BB's slower system/line). And, I have plans to greatly enlarge _that_ assortment!"

Myles Cohen tells Dana:
"That is truly great news...I have been waiting breathlessly for it to happen...I guess you can call me a Fileophile..."

Dana sends a reply to...
"Mr. Fileophile..... <grin> Once the holidays are over and I know where I stand with, ahem, disposable cash, I'll be making the switch. We've had a number of setbacks and I just can't wait any longer to enlarge the storage. I've also had a few cash contributions, so I want those people to also see a quick "return" for their generosity. It's won't be long now!"

After having found out that the drive I had chosen wouldn't work, I tell Dana:
"HAVE I GOT A DRIVE FOR YOU!... The 1.2 gig quantum that I received today just plain won't work. So I'm willing to sell it to you! <grin> Has anyone here had any luck at all getting an Atari host adaptor to recognize a Quantum FIREBALL TM? (yes, that is actually a "TM" and not a trade mark symbol) I've tried several different ways to get this sucker to work, all to no avail. I've tried with and without termination, as SCSI IDs 0-7, with the internal Atari HA, with an ADSCSI+ (the Atari HA only works for SCSI ID #0), and with and without prayers. ICDBOOT 6.5.5 doesn't even see it as a SCSI device. The only other thing I can think of it Parity. I see no jumper for enabling/disabling parity, so I guess I'm stuck. Luckily, MegaHaus will allow me to return the drive... for a re-stocking fee. So, who's got a 1.x gig drive that works for them? Gimme a make and model so I can get this doorstop out of my hands, and I'll be in your debt for ever... well, maybe just for a very long time. <grin>"

Carl Barron tells me:
"Yes I have and the 'old news' is they won't work) Arbtiration if I recall, is the problem. Try the HDDriver demo before 'ditching' it if it is not the boot drive."

Bill Anderson tells me:
"I've been useing a Seagate ST51080N 1.2 gig drive internally on a TT030 with ICD Pro 6.5.5. I had a little trouble at first when I partitioned it into 4 equal sized partitions. So then I made the first partition smaller (I can't remember how much) and everything seems to be OK now." When I mentioned the price of the drive I had ordered, it spurred Sysop Bob Retelle to post: "When were doing a little "cleanup" in my department a few months ago, I found a box of old PC Magazines and flipped through a few of them... One had an ad for a hard drive upgrade for a floppy only IBM PC (the original PC with a single floppy and a cassette tape interface)... it added a huge 20 Megabyte hard drive, and only cost a little over $500..! Such a deal..! Then again, I remember paying over $500 for my first Atari 810 *floppy drive* ...!!!
Ain't progress great..?" Never passing up a chance to take a shot at PC users, I tell Bob: I think the first hard drive I ever saw was a whopping 5 meg and was _almost_ as fast as a 5 1/4" floppy for reads and writes. Of

course back then there were no Operating Systems that took up 70 or 80 meg to start... You could do it all with a half-full floppy."

Well folks, that's about it for this week. Enjoy the holiday and please, please, please, do it safely. I'd be upset if I found out any of my friends took a dumb chance and lost. I need you to be here next week to read this column... that's the only reason they keep me on here! <grin> 'till then, as always, be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

EDITORIAL QUICKIES

The Night Before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the ship
Not a circuit was buzzing, not one microchip;
The phasers were hung in the armory securely,
In hopes that no aliens would get up that early.
The crewmen were nestled all snug in their bunks
(Except for the few who were partying drunks);
And Picard in his nightshirt and Bev in her lace,
Had just settled down for a neat face-to-face...
When out in the halls there arose such a racket,
That we leapt from our beds, pulling on pants and jacket.

Away to the lifts we all shot like a gun,
Leapt into the cars and yelled loudly, "Deck One!"
The bridge Red-Alert lights, which flashed through the din,
Gave a lustre of Hades to objects within.
When, what, on the viewscreen, should our eyes behold,
But a weird kind of sleigh, and some guy who looked old.
But the glint in his eyes was so strange and askew
That we knew in a moment it had to be Q.
His sleigh grew much larger as closer he came.
Then he zapped on the bridge and addressed us by name:
"It's Riker! It's Data! It's Worf and Jean-Luc!
It's Geordi! And Wesley, the genetic fluke!
To the top of the bridge, to the top of the hall!
Now float away! Float away! Float away all!"
As leaves in the autumn are whisked off the street,
So the floor of the bridge came away from our feet,
And up to the ceiling our bodies they flew,
As the captain called out, "What the hell is this, Q?!"
The prankster just laughed and expanded his grin,
And, snapping his fingers, he vanished again.

As we took in our plight and were looking around,
The spell was removed, and we crashed to the ground.
Then Q, dressed in fur from his head to his toe,
Appeared once again, to continue the show.
"That's enough!" cried the captain,
"You'll stop this at once!"

And Riker said, "Worf! Take aim at this dunce!"
"I'm deeply offended, Jean-Luc," replied Q,
"I just want to celebrate Christmas with you."
As we scoffed at his words, he produced a large sack.
He dumped out the contents and took a step back.
"I've brought gifts," he said, "just to show I'm sincere.
There's something delightful for everyone here."
He sat on the floor and dug into his pile,
And handed out gifts with his most charming smile:
"For Counsellor Troi, there's no need to explain.
Here's Tylenol-Beta for all of your pain.
For Worf I've some mints as his breath's not too great,
And for Geordi LaForge, an inflatable date.
For Wesley, some hormones, and Clearasil-Plus;
For Data, a joke book; for Riker, a truss.
For Beverly Crusher, there's sleek lingerie,
And for Jean-Luc, the thrill of just seeing her that way."
Then he sprang to his feet with that grin on his face
And, clapping his hands, disappeared into space.
But we heard him exclaim as he dwindled from sight,
"Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good flight!"

Based on "A Visit from St. Nicholas" by Clement C. Moore
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